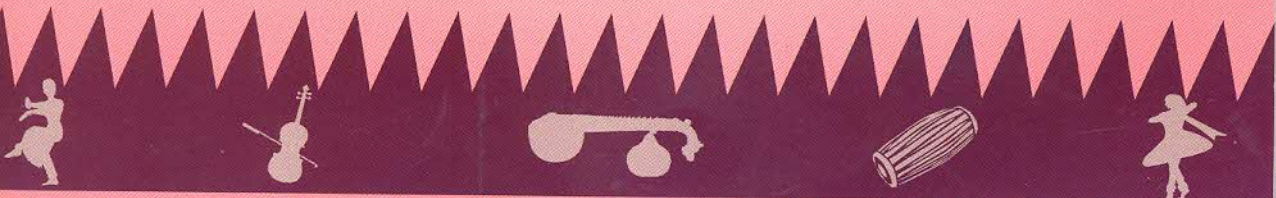




# इहानलुकेहा

A Cultural Journal







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## Front Cover :

Vignettes from the Birth Centenary Celebrations of Bharat Ratna Dr. M. S. Subbulakshmi

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## IN FOCUS

Kishori Amonkar, the doyenne of Hindustani classical music called M. S. Subbulakshmi, 'aatvaan sur' - the ultimate eighth note which rests above the 7 notes of music. The Oct-Dec issue of Shanmukha opens with the Birth Centenary celebrations of Bharat Ratna Dr. M. S. Subbulakshmi spanning four days, where the Sabha took an unmatched lead in organising such an event for this 'Queen of Music'.

Dr. Asha Gopalakrishnan begins her series of articles on Sri Muthuswamy Dikshitar and Soundarya Lahari bringing out the majesty and beauty in his kritis.

The Sabha celebrated the 125th Birth Anniversary of Papanasam Sivan, popularly known as Tamil Tyagayya where Smt. Nirmala Sundararajan and Smt. Subhashini Parthasarathy gave an exhaustive lecture demonstration highlighting all the unique features of the compositions of this legendary composer.

Janaki Krishnamoorthy writes about the Principal K. S. Narayanaswamy Vainika Award where veena artiste Mudicondan Shri. S. N. Ramesh was honoured.

Dr. Sakuntala Narasimhan gives a humorous account of how Gurus in today's music firmament have to adapt themselves to gizmos.

Jaishree Rao writes about the Swarna Utsav celebrations of her Bharatanatyam guru Smt. Rajee Narayan.

M. V. Swaroop writes a poignant tribute to his guru, flute maestro, late Dr. N. Ramani by narrating an incident that showcases the flautist's complete absorption with his Art.

Test your music quotient while solving the quiz and enjoy.

As the last issue was an M. S. Amma special, this issue's Sabha Round Up and Happenings at the Vidyalaya cover events that took place right from July.



## Bharat Ratna Dr. M. S. Subbulakshmi Birth Centenary Celebrations - A Report

Jayashri Suresh

The Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts and Sangeetha Sabha kickstarted the beginning of the Centenary Year of the Nightingale of Carnatic Music, Bharat Ratna Smt. M. S. Subbulakshmi, with a four day music festival. There were two parts to the function on all the days. The first part saw the felicitation and conferring of awards to senior vidwans and vidushis and the second part had a musical offering by various artistes. The Sabha stole the thunder as they were the very first to have celebrations for one of the most celebrated artistes of our times.

The Sabha premises wore a festive and celebratory look. There was a giant cutout of M. S. that smiled and welcomed the people. The foyer had a hundred lamps with twinkling lights, a floral *rangoli* on one side as well as a beautiful life-like *rangoli* of the artiste's face which added to the air of gaiety and festivity. Apart from this, the ladies bedecked in luminous, rustling silks added charm and revelry.

The auditorium inside had big portraits of the artiste in chronological order that captured her life journey. The excitement and anticipation was palpable as one entered the auditorium. The strains of her silky golden voice singing sublime music was heard in the background.

### Day 1 : 13th September, 2015



Shri. Vidyasagar Rao, Hon'ble Governor of Maharashtra being felicitated by Dr. V. Shankar

The President Dr. Shankar, Vice-President Dr. Rangaraj, Smt. Radha Vishwanathan who was to receive the Sangeetha Pracharya Special Award and Chief Guest Shri. Vidyasagar Rao, Honourable Governor of Maharashtra graced the stage.

The function commenced with a Vedic invocation rendered by the vidyarthi of the Nerul *veda paathashaalaa*. Then, Kum. Dharini Veeraraghavan rendered a few stanzas from *Bhaja Govindam*. The National Anthem did not play in the sound system and thus the audience lustily and enthusiastically rendered the Anthem.

The President then delivered his keynote address. He began by welcoming everybody and recalled with gratitude and reverence the journey of celestial and divine bliss. He stated that the Sabha was a living tradition and was a monument of cultural synthesis. He then dwelled on the special five decade association that M. S. had forged with the Sabha. He highlighted the milestones in that association where in the year 2000, she became an Honorary Patron, when in 2003, she gave her consent to provide her name to the Sangeetha Pracharya Award and how in 2006, the Bharatiya auditorium was christened the Bharatiya M. S. Subbulakshmi Auditorium. He also mentioned about how from 2013, Fellowship Award in her name had been instituted by the Sabha for young and promising artistes who would then become brand ambassadors of this Art form. He made a moving reference as to how she had moved from 'Swara to Eeshwara' on 11th Dec, 2004.

Dr. Shankar then spoke about the sacrifice of Smt. Radha where she, despite her enormous talent, had not attempted to strike out on her own and had chosen to sublimate by singing alongside her mother. He announced that she was visiting the auditorium for the first time after it had been rebuilt. He recalled the miraculous incident when midway through an M. S. concert, the curtains had suddenly come down and Smt. Radha after a long and scary battle with a debilitating illness, had come onstage and had joined her mother in singing to thunderous applause. He said that M. S. would be revelling in happiness from her abode as her favourite daughter and the sole torch bearer of her legacy was being honoured.



Smt. Radha Vishwanathan being felicitated by Shri. Vidyasagar Rao, Hon'ble Governor, Maharashtra

He then praised Hon. Governor of Maharashtra, Shri. Vidyasagar Rao for the unstinting support that he had always given to the Sabha. Shri. Amarnath Sury, Vice President of Sabha read the citation. The Governor then felicitated Smt. Radha Vishwanathan and presented her with the Sangeetha Pracharya Special Award. Her son, Shri. Srinivasan, gave the acceptance speech on his mother's behalf.

The Governor then addressed the audience. He began by praising how the auditorium had been converted into an M. S. memorial. Stating that there was no better way to honour a musical legend other than a music festival, he then spoke about the M. S.

portrait gallery and about how the Sabha had painstakingly gathered a huge reservoir of program recordings, books and CDs. He said that the Sabha was 'a place of happenings'. He praised the Sabha by saying that 15,500 programs was a record by itself and said that it was more than just an edifice. He said that the music of M. S. was one of pristine purity and had withstood the test of time and said that her Venkatesa Suprabhatam would be heard by many generations to come. He spoke about how vital cultural transcendence was and said that it was actually SADHANA. He stated that culture was essential to restrain oneself and that self-restraint was nothing but culture. He concluded by quoting the Vice-Chancellor of Peking University who had said that India had ruled China for more than 20 centuries culturally without sending a single soldier.



(l to r) Neyveli Shri. Skandasubramaniam (mrudangam), Alathur Shri. Rajganes (kanjira), Smt. Gayatri Venkataraghavan (vocal), Shri. Raghavendra Rao (violin)

The second part of the day's program saw Smt. Gayatri Venkataraghavan give a sangeethanjali full of M. S. Subbulakshmi's popular pieces.

She began with an invocation in praise of Lord Dakshinamurthy, *Om Namah Pranavaakaara...Shri Dakshinamurthaye Namah*. Then came a tiny outline of Hamsadhvani ragam and she then sang the Koteeshwara Iyer kriti *Varanamukha Vaa Thunai Varuvai* set to Rupaka talam and

sang kalpana swarams at *Varanamukha*. Next came Annamacharya's composition *Shriman Narayana* in Bowli set to Adi talam. This was followed by Mysore Vasudevacharya's evergreen Khamas kriti *Brochevarevarura* set to Adi talam. Maharaja Swathi Thirunal's composition *Bhogeendrashaayinam* in Kunthalavarali set to Khanda Chapu was the next piece. One could see the audience participating in the rendering of these songs as they were made extremely popular by M. S. She then sang Simhendramadhyamam ragam followed by Papanasam Sivan's kriti *Guha Saravanabhava Shivabala* set to Adi talam and rendered niraval at *Mayanodu Irupuram*.

Next came Muthuswamy Dikshitar's popular Devi kriti in Kamalamanohari, *Kanjadalaayathaakshi Kamakshi*, set to Adi talam which was followed by Tyagaraja's kriti *Ninnuvinaa Naamadendhu* in Navarasa Kaanada set to Rupakam talam. The main piece was Tyagaraja's composition in Kharaharapriya ragam, *Pakkala Nilabadi*, set to Adi talam where the artiste began with a raga alapana replete with brisk brigas and went on to sing niraval and swarams at *Tanuvuche Vandana*. Then came Kalki's composition *Katrinile Varum Geetam* in Sindhubhairavi ragam set to Adi talam. The Hindi bhajan *Akhiyaan Hari Darshan Ki Pyaasi* in Yaman set to Adi talam came next. This was followed by Jayadeva's Ashtapadi *Pralaya Payodhijale* in a ragamalika. Next came another ragamalika *Araamudhe Arase* set to Adi talam. This was followed by Bharatiyar's *Nenjukku Neediyum* in Sindhubhairavi set to Adi talam. Then came Rajaji's famous composition *Kurai Onrum Illai* which used to be the penultimate number in all M. S. concerts. She concluded with the universal prayer, *Maitreem Bhajatha*.

The first day set the tone for the entire celebrations and festivities.



**Day 2 : 14th September, 2015**

The song *Maitreem Bhajatha* has attained cult status thanks to M. S. singing it very appropriately at the United Nations. The plea for world peace, acceptance, tolerance, environmental awareness, brotherhood, friendship and goodwill showcased in the lyrics have touched a universal chord, more so, in the troubled times we live today. Dr. Shankar's decision to celebrate the commencement of the golden jubilee year of this iconic prayer resonated with the celebratory mood created on the first day.

Shri. E. S. L. Narasimhan, Honourable Governor for the States of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana presided over the function. The nonagenarian mrudangam artiste, Dr. T. K. Murthy, who had accompanied M. S. for close to 55 years, was to be felicitated.

The evening began as usual with a vedic invocation by students of the *Nerul veda paathashaala*. This was followed by Kum. Raksha and Kum. Ramya rendering *Ikanaina*, a favourite of M. S. (which was sung by her in the U.N.) as a prayer song. The students of the vidyalaya, who had been trained to sing *Maithreem Bhajatha* uniformly, sang it with the audience joining in enthusiastically. The vision of over 50 students dressed in the M. S. blue colour and singing in one voice was a sight to behold!



*The students of the Sangeetha Vidyalaya rendering Maithreem Bhajata.*

This was then followed by the interpretation of this prayer through dance where the senior students of the Rajarajeshwari Natya Kala Mandir performed Bharatanatyam.



*Students of Raja Rajeshwari Dance School interpreting Maithreem Bhajatha through a dance performance.*

The president welcomed everyone and began by saying that Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts and Sangeetha Sabha was like the Trinity, a *sangamam* of three institution builders namely Prof. T. V. Ramanujam, Dr. V. Subramaniam and Shri. R. S. Mani. He drew attention to the fact that it was the 1946th program of the Sabha and spoke about how the Sabha has been giving food for the mind as well as the soul and has been providing *shaantam*, *soukhyam*, *sukham* and *mangalam* for decades. He then dwelled on how the element of bhakti was soaked in Indian classical music and about how M. S. had led a life of devotion and that her voice had remained immortal because it was simply soaked in Bhakti. He eulogised that just like the poet Kambar had become exasperated because he could not find words to express Lord Rama's beauty, one is faced with the same predicament while trying to describe M. S. Subbulakshmi.

He then introduced Dr. T. K. Murthy and lauded his 81 years of dedication to Carnatic Music and then requested the Chief Guest to present the award to the artiste, Dr. V. Rangaraj, the Vice-President of the Sabha read the citation.



Shri. T. K. Murthy being felicitated by Shri. E. S. L. Narasimhan, Hon'ble Governor of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana

'Sarvaloka Ratna'! He then exhorted other institutions to take inspiration from Dr. Shankar and celebrate her centenary in a grand manner all over the country.



The second half of the evening saw a mono-act by Smt. Revathy Sankkaran called 'Maanikka Veena'.

She regaled the audience with songs, humour and drama and took the onlookers on a chronological journey of the life of M. S. using the portraits hung in the auditorium as memory hooks and concluded the second day's celebrations in her inimitable dramatic and engaging way.

< Smt. Revathy Sankkaran presenting 'Maanikka Veena' - a mono-act

### Day 3 : 15th September, 2015

The Golden Jubilee of the Pidi Arisi Thittam, the simple yet effective way of ensuring food for the poor and destitute, promulgated by the Mahaswami of Kanchi was celebrated on this day. The artiste who was to be felicitated with the Sangeetha Pracharya Award was the veteran kathakali exponent and centenarian, Shri. Kunhiraman Nair.

The evening began with a Vedic invocation and was followed by a prayer song, *Aliveni*, rendered evocatively by the mother-daughter duo, Kum. Gayatri and Smt. Suja.

The President in his address highlighted how various decisions were taken during the Golden Jubilee Year of the Sabha like instituting the National Eminence Awards, the Shanmukha Shiromani Awards, the Vayo Vrudhdha Yojana and the Sangeetha Pracharya Awards. He mentioned the special honour that M. S. had given the Sabha by lending her name to the M. S. Subbulakshmi Sangeetha Pracharya Award while she was alive. He highlighted the fact that while M. S. herself was not a teacher, she had set a shining example for all artistes and had become a teacher to all aspiring musicians from the platform of all her concerts.



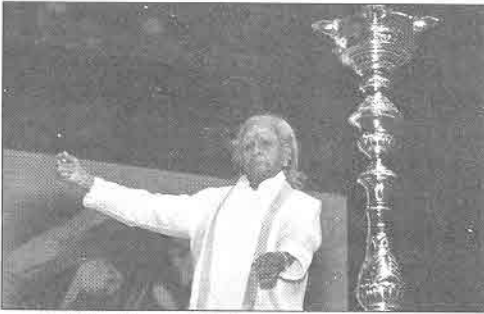
Shri. R. Sridhar, Shri. P. S. Narayanaswamy, Shri. Kunhiraman Nair, Shri. Rangaraj and Dr. V. Shankar and Centenarian Shri. Kunhiraman Nair is being felicitated.

He then welcomed the awardee, Shri. Kunhiraman Nair and highlighted that he had actually completed his 100th year on Karthikai Mithunam as per the Malayalam calendar and briefed the audience about the salient features of his life achievements. He lauded how Shri. Nair had made Kathakali his life mission and had served this Art form for close to 80 years. The Award was then presented to the artiste.

Then, various institutions and Sabhas like Shringeri Sharada Peetam, Asthika Samaj, Shankara Matam, Bhakta Anjaneya Sabha, Bombay Keraleeya Samaj, Rajarajeshwari Natya Kala Mandir, Ahobila Matam,



South Indian Bhajana Samaj, Nritya Geetanjali and Nrityodaya, also came forth to felicitate the centenarian.



Shri. Kunhiraman Nair showcasing the navarasas.

What followed next was the highlight of the entire evening. This centenarian artiste without any tremor, fumbling or physical support rose gracefully from his chair, came forth in front of the stage and showed the navarasas in abhinaya which elicited stupendous applause from the audience. It was humbling as well as inspirational to see this aged yet nimble, cheerful and luminous centenarian personality perform without any sign of his age. It was a treat to witness how complete sublimation to an Art form can totally transcend human limitations and boundaries!



The members of the Women's Wing performing a Kaikottikali with centenarian Nair in the center

Then the ladies from the Women's Wing all dressed in cream and gold, the traditional colours of Kerala, performed a *kaikottikali* with the centenarian seated in the middle.

This was followed by the felicitation of one of the most sought after and popular gurus in Carnatic music, Shri. P. S. Narayanasamy. Then, the Sabha honoured the various sponsors.

Shri. Kunhiraman Nair's grand daughter gave the acceptance speech on his behalf and Smt. Santosh Rajan proposed the vote of thanks, partly in Malayalam.



(l to r) Shri. N. C. Bharadwaj (mridangam), Ms. Amritha Murali (vocal), Shri. R. Raghul (violin)

The second part of the evening saw a vocal performance, a special tribute called 'Shatabdhi Samarpanam' by Ms. Amritha Murali accompanied Shri. R. Raghul on the violin and Shri. N. C. Bharadwaj on the mridangam. The artiste spoke briefly about how she had chosen songs from the album that M. S. had released during the 100th year celebrations of the Kanchi Mahaswami.

She began with the invocation to Lord Dakshinamurthy, *Om Namah Pranavaakara* and then rendered the Durga Pancharatnam, a prayer

comprising 5 verses that had been composed by the Mahaswami himself on Goddess Durga. Then came a short but vintage sketch of Sahana ragam followed by a viruttam beginning with the phrase *Karunai Enum Varidhiye* and then sang Periyasamy Thooran's composition, *Enna Perum Thavam* set to Adi talam.

Next came a ragamalika called *Guru Dashakam*, a composition of His Holiness Shri Shankara Vijayendra Saraswati Swamigal, the 70th pontiff of the Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam on the Kanchi Mahaswami. Then came a brief sketch in Kiravani ragam followed by Dr. V. Raghavan's composition *Chandrashekaram Aashraye* set to Khanda Triputa talam.

This was followed by an excellent Shankarabharanam raga alapana followed by a small viruttam beginning with the phrase *Anndiyavarkku Annayai* and then she sang Shri. Atmanathan's composition *Chandrashekara Kripamidhey* set to Adi talam and rendered very good niraval at *Oyaa Peralai Bhavakadal Kadandhida* and followed it with kalpana swarams in second speed. This was followed by a crisply executed thani avartanam by the accompanying artiste. Then came another composition by Shri. Atmanathan, a moving Hindi bhajan, *Guruvar Deejo Charan Tumhare*, in

Madhuvanti ragam set to Adi talam. Then came *Paduka Stuthi Panchakam* a slokam composed by Malladi Dakshinamurthy Shastrigal on Mahaperiyava in a ragamalika. Thotakashtakam popularised in the voice of M. S. followed in a ragamalika. She concluded the concert with the universal prayer *Maithreem Bhajatha*.

**Day 4 : 16th September, 2015**

The final day of the celebrations saw a record crowd of people. All the 50 M. S. Subbulakshmi Fellowship awardees were seated on stage and the crowd waited with bated breath for the Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Shri. Devendra Fadnavis, the Chief Guest, to arrive.



(l to r) Dr. V. Shankar, Capt. Tamil Selvan (MLA), The Hon'ble Chief Minister of Maharashtra Shri. Devendra Fadnavis, Shri. Prakash Mehta (Minister for Housing) and Shri. A. K. Dash (Head, Indian Posts, Maharashtra Circle) where the Hon'ble Chief Minister is inaugurating the special postal cover

The evening also had a special event planned as the Department of Posts, Maharashtra Circle had brought out a special postal cover on 'M. S. and Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts and Sangeetha Sabha' and the inauguration of the same was awaited. Apart from this, artistes Shri. K. V. Prasad and Shri. R. K. Shriramkumar were also scheduled to be felicitated.

The evening commenced with a Vedic invocation by the *vidyarthi*s of the Nerul *veda paathashaala*. The prayer song, *Hari Tum Haro*, was sung by Smt. Abilasha Gautam.

The President welcomed everyone and announced that it was the maiden visit of the Chief Minister to the Sabha and that it was extremely appropriate that a Maharashtrian was presiding over the function as the first song that M. S. performed ever in front of an audience was an Abhang in Marathi called *Anandajaa*. Dr. V. Shankar proclaimed M. S. to be a national asset and highlighted the special bond that M. S. had shared with the Sabha.

The C. M. then inaugurated the special postal cover.

The Chief Minister then proceeded to felicitate the Minister of Housing Shri. Prakash Mehta followed by Shri. A. K. Dash, Shri. P. S. Narayanaswamy and Dr. Prema Rangarajan. Later, Captain Tamil Selvan, the MLA from that area honoured the Chief Minister. This was then followed by the felicitation of Shri. K. V. Prasad and Shri. R. K. Shriramkumar.



(l to r) Dr. V. Rangaraj, Shri. R. K. Shriramkumar, Shri. P. S. Narayanaswamy, Chief Minister of Maharashtra Shri. Devendra Fadnavis and Dr. V. Shankar where Shri. R. K. Shriramkumar is being felicitated.



(l to r) Dr. V. Rangaraj, Shri. K. V. Prasad, Shri. Devendra Fadnavis, Chief Minister, Maharashtra and Dr. V. Shankar where Shri. K. V. Prasad is being felicitated.

The Chief Minister gave an 8 minute succinct and sweet speech where he first mentioned the pride that he was feeling because Maharashtra was the only State which was at that point celebrating the birth centenary year of M. S. He dwelled on the fact that her music was amazing, magical and spellbinding because it was not mere voice but the sound of her soul and he said that when voice became soul, it became eternal and had the ability to transport, transcend and enlighten the listener. He then stressed on the need to preserve and transmit the rich cultural heritage with its various languages, Art forms and traditions that was India's treasure. He pointed out that India was what it



was today due to that rich cultural heritage and the contributions of great artistes like M. S. which the world holds in high esteem.

He then spoke about his trip to Japan where he visited Koyasan, the holy place where the Japanese bring the ashes after performing the last rites for the dead and where there is a living memorial for Kobo-Daishi, the great monk who took Buddhism to Japan and who is believed to dwell in an enlightened state inside a cave there. He then narrated how when he had stood outside the holy cave and was listening to the prayer chants being recited by the senior monks, he realised to his utter surprise and delight that the verses were in Sanskrit. He then went on to tell how the monks had later explained to him that all the 5 people who had developed that sect of Buddhism before Kobo-Daishi, had hailed from India. He also narrated the interesting fact that when he had visited a pagoda at Koyasan, he had seen a huge life-size statue of Budha with Goddess Kali on one hand and Goddess Saraswathi on the other. He then concluded by saying how we had transferred this rich culture and heritage to other nations and reiterated that it was high time to remind ourselves that we had the best and must therefore endeavour to preserve and protect it. He stated his happiness about the Sabha's role in perpetuating this cultural heritage by awarding promising artistes and thereby enthusing them to carry forth the rich legacy of M. S.



The Chief Minister with all the M. S. Fellowship awardees and with Shri. K. V. Prasad and Shri. R. K. Shriramkumar

He concluded by wishing the awardees the very best in their future endeavours and also thanked the Sabha and its office bearers for actually doing service to the nation by preserving our culture and stated that he and his government, if and when needed, would be extremely happy to provide any assistance to the Sabha.

The stage then was rearranged for the Sangeethanjali that was to be performed by some of the awardees. Artistes Brinda Manickavasakan, Keerthana Vaidyanathan, Kalpalathika Ravishankar, Vasudha Ravi, Deekshita Venkatraman, Pooja Suresh among the ladies and Kunnakudi M. Balamuralikrishna, Sunil Gargyan, Ashwath Narayanan, Venkatnagarajan and S. Aravind among the men performed accompanied by K. P. Nandini and K. Raghul on the violin and K. Praveen Kumar and Sumesh Narayanan on the mridangam.

The artistes began with Muthaiah Bhagavathar's daru varnam in Khamas, *Mathey* set to Adi talam. Annamacharya's composition *Bhavayami Gopala Balam* in Yamunakalyani set to Khanda Chapu came next and was followed by Tyagaraja's pancharatna kriti in Nattai, *Jagadananda Kaaraka* set to Adi talam. Tyagaraja kriti *Evarani* in Devamrutavarshini ragam set to Adi talam which was followed by the moving and melodious song *Kurai Onrum Illai*, a composition of Rajaji in a ragamalika set to Adi talam. The artistes concluded with the evergreen and popular universal prayer *Maithreem Bhajatha*.

Thus the four day extravaganza of music and festivity celebrating the commencement of the birth centenary year of the Nightingale of Carnatic Music Bharat Ratna, Dr. M. S. Subbulakshmi, where all the programs were covered live on Sankara TV and a webcast also was made available, came to an end and the grand manner in which the Sabha conducted the celebrations proved to be a real feather in the cap for the institution.



Some of the M. S. Fellowship awardees giving a performance.

## Sri Muthuswami Dikshitar and Soundarya Lahari-1

Dr. Asha Gopalakrishnan



Sri Muthuswami Dikshitar

It is a well-known fact that Sri Muthuswami Dikshitar, one of the Music Trinity, was a Srividyaopasaka. His compositions are replete with references to various aspects of this spiritual discipline. One can also see the influence of the cardinal stotras of Srividya, namely the Saundarya Lahari and the Lalitha Sahasranama in his compositions. While the references to the names and ideas in the Lalitha Sahasranama are quite explicit, those referring to the Saundarya Lahari are both explicit and implicit. Sometimes, we have a verbatim reproduction of the ideas and



sometimes we have suggestions implied in a beautiful and unique manner. The examples are many and they will be dealt with successively in the following pages.

The first kriti to be taken up is *Gauri Girirajakumari* in the ragam Gauri. While generally most of the compositions of Dikshitar are confections of various ideas, this is all the more so. Dikshitar opens the kriti poetically with a beautiful expression '*gaana-vana-mayuri*' – the Goddess is a peacock in the forest of music. In the very next phrase, he reminds us that She is not to be mistaken for a frolicking, dancing peacock. She is something much much more; Her dignity and majesty are incomprehensible – '*gambheera-kaumari*'.

As we move on to the anupallavi, Dikshitar offers his prostrations to the Supreme Goddess saluted by Vishnu, Brahma and others – '*shaureesha-virinchaadi-mahithe shaambavi namaste paradevate*'. These lines echo in part the first stanza of the Soundarya Lahari where it is said the Mother Goddess is the Supreme Power saluted by Vishnu, Brahma, Hara and others. Only if one is endowed with great merit, can one be fortunate enough to salute or praise Her – '*athastvaam aaraadhyaam harihara-virinchaadibhirapi pranantum stotum vaa katham akritha punyaha prabhavati*'.

Moving on to the charanam, it starts with the phrase '*navachakra-svaroopavataare*' – meaning She takes on the form of Srichakra or to be precise the nine chakras which go to make up the Srichakra. Tantric texts speak of the Srichakra as a form of the Goddess. They describe the evolution of the Srichakra from Her, saying that She changes into the form of Srichakra. The Srichakra consists of four Siva-chakras and five Shakti-chakras. The eleventh shloka of the Soundarya Lahari beginning with the words '*chaturbhih-shrikantaihi*' gives an elaborate account of this.

[In another composition *Neerajakshi Kamakshi* in Hindola ragam, we find a beautiful combination of both the ideas discussed above – '*shauri-virinchi-vinuta-siva-sakti maya navavarane*'.]

As we move further down the composition, we come across another phrase – '*sringaaraadi nava rasaadhaare*' – the Goddess is the abode of the nine rasas, sringaara etc. This reminds us of the verse 51 of the Soundarya Lahari – '*Sive sringaaraardra*' – There Adi Sankara describes the eyes of Devi as exhibiting all the rasas.

While he describes the different situations which bring out the different rasas in Her eyes, (eg:-sringaara when She looks lovingly at Her Lord), it is most touching when he says, 'O Mother! Let those eyes look upon me with compassion'. By the usage of the word 'me', the Acharya is by extension referring to all of us. It thus becomes a universal prayer!

Sri Muthuswami Dikshitar uses the word '*navarasa*' – nine rasas. There is a school of thought in Indian poetics that admits only eight rasas. *Santa* or the state of tranquility is not strictly a rasa. But Adi Sankara and Dikshitar do take into account *santa rasa* also. For is not this the very nature of Devi Herself! She Herself is '*Santa-svaroopini*'.

Dikshitar mentions Devi as the embodiment of the nine rasas in a different but picturesque way in another kriti too. The kriti is addressed to Lord Siva and is in raga Dhavalangi. Siva is described as white in complexion (*dhavalanga*-this being the *raga-mudra* too!) He is embraced by His consort Brihadamba who is the embodiment of the nine rasas – '*Sringaaraadi-navarasaangi-brihadambaalingita pungava dhavalanga shriyam dehi*'.

This description has a lot of philosophical and esoteric overtones which are beyond the scope of this article.

Coming back to the kriti 'Gauri', as we move further down to the *madhyama kala sahityam*, we come across the phrase – '*nija-charana-pankajodbhava-tattva-samashtyaagaare*'.

It refers to Devi's Feet being the source to all tattvas. This in a beautiful and imaginative way encapsulates the idea expressed in the 14<sup>th</sup> sloka of the Soundarya Lahari '*kshithau shat-panchaashat*'. Here, Devi's Feet are described in the *Bindu* in the centre of the Sahasrara in the crown of the head. 360 rays from Her feet proceed to the lower chakras and divide severally into groups to constitute the conglomerate of all the tattvas in the cosmos. Thus Dikshitar in a one-liner expresses a profound and complicated concept.

Proceeding further, he ingeniously describes Her abode in the Manidvipa situated in the ocean of nectar, literally borrowing phrases from the 8<sup>th</sup> stanza of the Soundarya Lahari as seen in the kriti Gauri Girirajakumari where the madhyamakala sahityam is – '*sudha sindhu-madhye, chintamanyagaare shivaakaara-manche para-shiva-paryanka-vihare*'

Thus, we see the genius of Dikshitar in incorporating many ideas so melodiously into the compass of one kriti.

[A line by line explanation of the kriti is not attempted as the focus is only on the phrases containing references to the Soundarya Lahari].

Successive articles will continue to feature many more such interesting references.....

(to be continued)

*Dr. R. Asha is a Sanskrit scholar. She has authored books on Sri Muthuswami Dikshitar. She can be reached at asharsree@gmail.com*

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# 125th Birth Anniversary of Papanasam Sivan (26-09-2015) - A Report

Jayashri Suresh

इहान्तलुक्कः : OCT-DEC 2015

The 125th birth anniversary of one of the most celebrated composers of the post-trinity period of Carnatic Music, Papanasam Sivan, also popularly known as Tamil Tyagayya, was celebrated at the vidyalaya on his birth date itself.



(l to r) Bombay Shri S. Shankaranarayanan (mrudangam),  
Dr. Nirmala Sundararajan and Dr. Subhashini Parthasarathy (vocal),  
Smt. Sharada Murali (violin)

A lecture demonstration highlighting the salient features of his music was presented by a mother-daughter duo. The mother, Dr. Nirmala Sundararajan, a septuagenarian, an 'A' grade artiste of AIR and Doordarshan and the Head of Vani Gurukulam, a music school in Chennai, who learnt under many eminent gurus and who did her thesis on the critical and historic study of compositional diversities in Carnatic Music study along

with her daughter Dr. Subhashini Parthasarathy, who learnt from renowned gurus and who did her thesis on padams and javalis were accompanied by Smt. Sharada Murali on the violin and Bombay Shri. S. Shankaranarayanan on the mrudangam.

Dr. Subhashini who did most of the explaining began by thanking the Sabha for the opportunity and the duo commenced with the kriti *Gajavadana* in Sriranjani ragam set to Adi talam.

Sharing some of the personal experiences, her mother, Dr. Nirmala, mentioned how she had learnt that kriti directly from Sivan in the 1950s. She reminisced about how she used to go to Mylapore Girls High School and was a classmate of Sivan's daughter and spoke about how his music was a perfect blend of sahitya and sangeetha with a perfect balance of raga, tala and bhava.

Speaking about the influences that shaped Sivan's music, Dr. Subhashini then spoke about how his association with Karamanai Nilakanta Sivan's bhajanai goshti was responsible for sparking his love for Tamil music and about how he popularised Nilakantan Sivan's compositions like *Navasidhdhi Petralum* in Kharaharapriya and *Enraikku Siva Kripai* in Mukhari and also dwelled on the influence that the Sadguruswami Matt at Marudanallur, famous for Nama Sidhdhanta and Bhajanai, had had on him.

She threw light on the the magnitude of his prolific composing ability and spoke about how Sivan had created close to 2000 compositions varying from pada varnams, tana varnams, kritis, kirtanas, ragamalikas, viruttams, tillanas, chindus, namavalis and about 800 songs for Tamil films. The duo presented a tana varnam in Panthuvrali ragam, *Neeye Pedhai*, set to Adi talam.

Dr. Subhashini went on to highlight how Sivan's varnams were filled with sahitya and had less vowel sounds unlike the other tana varnams that usually had a lot of vowel extensions. She went on to talk about the first composition of Sivan which he had composed in praise of the Lord at Thiruvurur during the rathotsavam.

The duo presented this kriti, *Unnai Thuthikka* in Kunthalavarali ragam and set to Adi talam.

She listed the number of songs on the various deities that Sivan had composed as follows :- Lord Shiva-150, Goddess Ambika-85, Lord Subramanya-60, Lord Krishna-40, Lord Rama-25, Lord Vishnu-15, Lord Ganesha-5, Goddess Lakshmi-5, Lord Narayana-3, Lord Anantapadmanabha-3, Lord Anjaneya-3, Lord Ayyappan-3, Lord Guruvayoorappan-1, Goddess Tulasi-1 and one kriti on the Navagrahas.

She then spoke about how once during a discussion that Ramanathapuram Krishnan and Sivan had had about Tyagaraja's Navarasa Kannada kriti, *Ninnuvina*, Krishnan had opined that the kriti was far more suited to instrumental music. This had enthused Sivan to compose the very popular kriti *Naan Oru Vilayattu Bommaya* in the same ragam which was set to Adi talam. The duo then went on to present a soulful rendition of the kriti.

Dr. Subhashini then spoke about how that particular piece while not coming under the classification of a major kriti had still remained a master piece as it had encapsulated all the shades and nuances of the ragam beautifully without any terse sancharas or sangatis and had remained as a prime example of his ability to harmonise lyrics and music.

Then, she spoke about the originality in the musical content of the kritis, *Padmanabhan Maruga* in Nagaswaravali and *Varalakshmi Thaye* in Salaga Bhairavi and mentioned how Konerirajapuram Vaidyanatha Iyer had started including Sivan's compositions in his concerts and about how Papanasam Sivan used to sing exactly like Ayyar and that all that Sivan learnt from Ayyar had been immortalised in Sivan's compositions.

Dr. Nirmala then went on to render *Varalakshmi Thaye*, an Adi tala kriti in Salaga Bhairavi which is not heard commonly in concerts.

Dr. Subhashini exhorted as to how Sivan had handled close to 100 ragams and amongst them, 19 melakarta ragams and the rest being janya ragams. She mentioned how Sivan had been influenced by Tyagaraja especially in the handling of Kharaharapriya and Harikambhoji. She then dwelt on the chowka kala Kambhoji kriti *Kaana Kannkodi Vendum* which brought out every possible shade of the raga and how its music was replete with raga bhava, intricate gamakas and sancharas traversing the middle as well as upper octaves and about how the kriti showcased the beauty of Lord Kapaleeshwarar when being brought out in a procession during the Panguni Uttaram festival. She stated that the minute detail with which Sivan had described the Adhikara Nandi and the different deities that followed the main deity was comparable to a Muthuswamy Dikshitar kriti right down to the madhyamakala sahyam while the extensive elaboration of Kambhoji had been inspired by Tyagaraja's *Evari Maata* and *O Rangashayee*. She then spoke of how a composition like *Paradevate* in Manirangu was fast paced and about how comfortable Sivan was in composing in different tempos.

The duo rendered the Kambhoji kriti followed by the Manirangu kriti to showcase the contrast in speeds.

Then, Dr. Subhashini went on to highlight the special place that Kharaharapriya ragam had in the compositions of Sivan and about how it was a favourite of both Tyagaraja as well as Sivan. She spoke about how Sivan had composed 21 kritis in that ragam where each piece was unique in its richness and individuality. Even though Tyagaraja had not used gandharam, madhyamam and daivatam as the starting note in his kritis, Sivan had composed kritis using different starting notes in the Kharaharapriya scale right from 'sa' to 'ni' as follows:-

Sa - *Saraswathi Annaye*, Ri - *Srinivasa*, Ga - *Ganapatiye*, Ma - *Dayaparan*,

Pa - *Paramukham*, Da - *Dayavillaya* and Ni - *Janakipathe*.

She then spoke about how even in the Kharaharapriya compositions, there were many variations. eg. While the kriti *Sendil Aandavan* was built around the lower tetrachord of the middle octave, kritis like *Srinivasa*, *Appan Avatariththa*, *Saraswathi* and *Janakipathe* centered around the upper tetrachord of the middle octave and the lower tetrachord of the higher octave. She then highlighted the other variations and certain special qualities in the Kharaharapriya kritis.

eg. *Srinivasa* and *Janakipathe* - slightly slower tempo whereas *Kaadali Radheyai* and *Enna Seidalum* - fast paced. *Dayaparan*-sarva laghu pattern. *Aaranamum Aagamamum*, composed in 8 lines - modelled after a Tiruppugazh. A recording of Smt. Shuba Ganesan rendering this was played.

She focussed attention on how his mudra 'Ramadasan' had been incorporated in about 85 of his compositions and how in a few kritis, he had also used the raga mudra. eg. *Devi Niye* in Kiravani.

She then spoke about how majority of his compositions were set to Adi talam wherein most were in 1 kalai but those that were very popular were set to 2 kalai eg. *Kapali* in Mohanam, *Adum Deivam* in Kambhoji and *Kartikeya* in Todi.

Dr. Nirmala did a raga alapana in Todi and the duo rendered the kriti *Karthikeya Gangeya Gowri Tanayaa* set to 2 kalai Adi talam with niraval at *Maal Maruga*. This was followed by a brief and well rendered percussion thani.

Dr. Subhashini then dwelled on how Sivan's Kedaragowlai composition *Samikku Sari Evvare* was comparable to the Kedaragowlai padam of Kshetragnya and about how *Padari* in Saveri and *Unnai Ninaindu* in Chakravakam had been composed with the dual interpretation of the nayika yearning for the nayaka as well as the Almighty.

*Padari Manamayarndu* in Saveri set to Adi talam was beautifully rendered by Dr. Nirmala.



She then went on to highlight how many compositions had identical varnamettus in order to standardise certain important melodies. eg. In Shankarabharanam ragam, Kshetragnya - *Evvade*, Muvvanallur Sabhapayya - *Darijuchunnadi*, Govindasami Ayya - *Maninivinave*, Ghanam Krishna Iyer-*Tanakkutaane*, Muthuswamy Dikshitar - *Akshaya Linga Vibho*, Tyagaraja - *Manasu Svadheena* and Papanasam Sivan - *Mahalakshmi Jaganmatha*, all these had similar varnamettus.

She then highlighted how the ragam Natabhairavi inspite of being an important mela karta ragam that had given rise to many janya ragams had not been handled by the Trinity and how Sivan had composed *Shri Valli Devasenapathe*, the extremely popular Natabhairavi kriti.

Sivan's comfort in a variety of compositional pieces and languages was brought in focus where Dr. Subhashini spoke about the folk melody in the Yamuna Kalyani piece *Kumaran Thiruvadi* set to Adi talam and the chaste Sanskrit lyrics in the kriti *Sivaganga Nagara Nivasini* in Punnagavarali set to Adi talam and rendered both the pieces along with *Nama Bhajare* in Mand set to Adi talam which was rendered by Dr. Nirmala.

She dwelled on how some of Sivan's kritis, despite being composed in the same ragam, had a distinct and unique flavour and gave examples of Atana - *Shri Ramanaama* and *Nee Irangai*, Mukhari - *Sharanam Aiyappa* and *Shivakama Sundari*, Lathangi - *Venkataramana* and *Pirava varam* and Shahana - *Shri Vatapi* and *Chittam Irangadenayya* and went on to speak about how Sivan had incorporated many Sanskrit words in the lyrics of his Tamil compositions. Dr. Nirmala rendered the Misra Chapu tala Shahana kriti, *Chittam Irangadenayya*.

Dr. Subhashini drew attention to how Sivan's kritis had many variations in the structure by providing the following examples:-

- a) *Balakrishnan Padamalar* in Dhanyasi has a pallavi, anu pallavi and charanam.
- b) *Kartikeya* in Todi has different melodies or dhatu in the charanams (in an elaborate kriti) and *Enna Tavam* in Kapi (more like a tukkada).
- c) *Engum Niraindirukkum* in Kurinji has pallavi and anu pallavi with madhymakala sahitya.
- d) *Shivaganga* in Punnagavarali has charanams with the same dhatu.
- e) *Saravanabhava* in Shanmukhapriya has the same music of the anu pallavi in the second half of the charanam.
- f) *Kapali* in Mohanam and *Vandarulvai* in Devamanohari have chittaswarams.
- g) *Isaney* in Chakravakam has madhymakala sahitya in the charanam while *Balakrishnan* in Dhanyasi has both in anupallavi as well as charanam and *Karpagame* in Madhyamavati has the entire charanam in madhymakalam.
- h) *Srinivasa* in Hamsanandi has few sangatis while *Kaana Kann Kodi* in Kambhoji has many.

They rendered *Karpagame* in Madhyamavati set to Adi talam and *Idadhu Padam* in Khamas set to Adi talam where the charanam is set in Tisra nadai.

Lastly, she dwelled on the music that Sivan had composed for Tamil films which made him extremely popular. She mentioned how 'Sita Kalyanam' was the first movie for which he composed music and how he had a popular hit in the same movie in the song *Kaanakam Yedhu Swami* in Bilahari. She spoke about how many stalwarts like Shri. G. N. B, Smt. M. S. Subbulakshmi, Smt. Vasantakokilam, Shri. Dandapani Desikar, Shri. P. U. Chinappa and Shri. M. K. Tyagaraja Bhagavatar had rendered his songs for celluloid and how his film songs were highly classical in content and depicted devotional and musical fervour. Dr. Nirmala then rendered an excellent *Giridhara Gopala* in Mohanam set to Adi talam and concluded with *Shri Rama Jaya Mangalam* in Surutti.

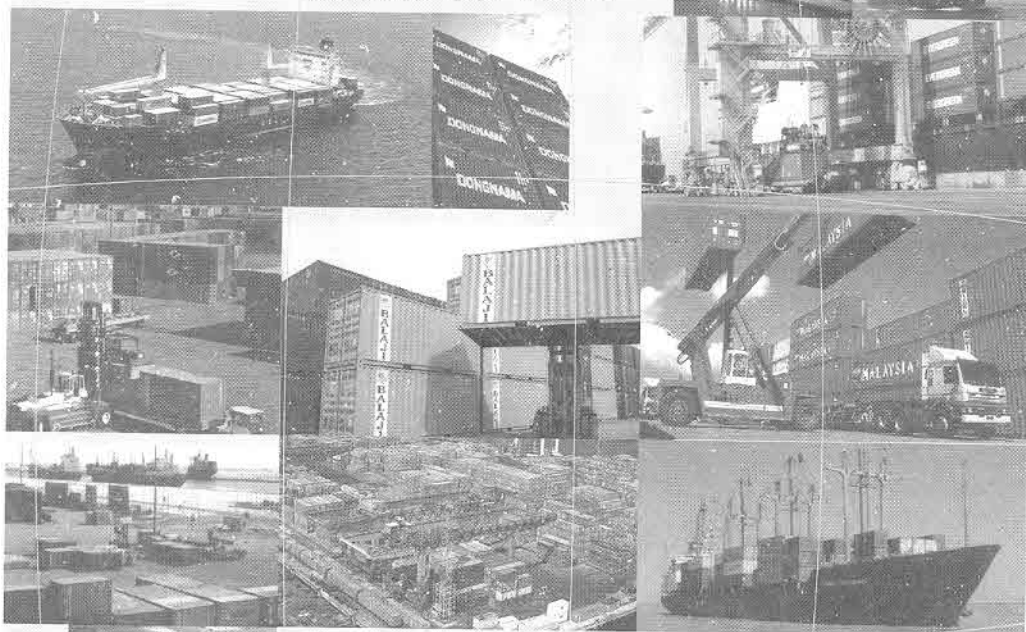
While concluding, Dr. Subhashini specifically expressed her gratitude and appreciation to Dr. Prof. Jayaseethalakshmi for sharing vast information on Sivan's compositions and also to Smt. Kanakadurga, Smt. Shubha Ganesan, Smt. Radha Parthasarathy and Shri. Vijay Siva for their extensive support and guidance.

The lecture demonstration was a fitting tribute to one of the greatest composers of the post-trinity period of Carnatic music and provided a treasure trove of information about this composer and the evening was compered by Smt. Jayashri Suresh.

*Jayashri Suresh is the Assistant Editor of Shanmukha.*

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# Sri Shanmukhananda Principal K. S. Narayanaswamy Centenary Vainika Award

Janaki Krishnamoorthy

इहानलुक्ता : OCT-DEC 2015



(l to r) Shri. R. Sridhar, Mudikondan Shri. S. N. Ramesh, Dr. V. Shankar and Shri. V. S. Amarnath Sury where Shri. S. N. Ramesh is receiving the K. S. Narayanswamy Centenary Vainika Award.

The first Sri Shanmukhananda Principal K. S. Narayanaswamy Centenary Vainika Award was conferred on Mudikondan Shri S. N. Ramesh, a renowned veena artiste on 27<sup>th</sup> September, 2015. The annual award instituted by Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha (SSFASS) Mumbai, in memory of Veena Vidwan Padma Bhushan Sri K. S. Narayanaswamy, was presented on the occasion of his 101st birth anniversary, at a function held at Sri Shanmukhananda Chandrasekarendra Saraswathi Auditorium.

While speaking on the occasion, Dr. V. Shankar, President, SSFA&SS said the Sabha had instituted the award as a homage to the great master Shri. K. S. Narayanaswamy and as a homage to veena. "This award carries much reverence as it is named after somebody who lived and breathed veena all his life. It is also a step forward to promote and preserve the divine instrument that has been fast eclipsing from center stage of music in the last few decades. Unless something is done seriously to arrest this trend veena is destined to go to archives and remain there forever. That will be the greatest disservice we will do to all the maha vidwans, who had brought the instrument to the great level it had occupied earlier" he added.

In fact, the institution of the award, was triggered by the birth centenary celebration of Shri. K. S. Narayanaswamy organised in November 2014 by renowned Mumbai musicians Sangeetha Kala Acharya Smt Kalyani Sharma, disciple of Shri. K. S. Narayanaswamy and ex-Joint Director, Sri Shanmukhananda Sangeetha Vidyalaya (SSSV) Mumbai, Acharya Choodamani Smt. Alamelu Mani and Smt. Radha Namboodiri, Director & Principal, Sri Shanmukhananda Bharatiya Sangeetha Vidyalaya, which was supported by Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts and Sangeetha Sabha. It was at this function that Dr. Shankar announced that the Shanmukhananda Sabha managing committee would consider instituting an annual award in the name of Shri K. S. Narayanaswamy, who headed the Sri Shanmukhananda Sangeetha Vidyalaya for 15 years.

While recapping the maestro's contribution as principal of the Sri Shanmukhananda Sangeetha Vidyalaya, Dr. V. Shankar said, "KSN as he was fondly called, was very dear to the Sangeetha Vidyalaya and he raised the institution to great heights during his tenure. It was the golden era of the Vidyalaya which had a formidable faculty and Carnatic music blazed a new trail. Students flocked to the Vidyalaya and there were 300 students in veena alone. KSN was an outstanding Guru and his *Patanthara Sudham* has to be heard to be believed".

Earlier Shri. V. S. Amarnath Sury, Vice President, SSFA&SS also spoke highly of Shri. K. S. Narayanaswamy. "Shri. K. S. Narayanaswamy was a vainika vidwan of exceptional merit. To his contemporaries, he was a musician's musician, to the ardent rasika, he was a repository of valuable solid sastra-based music and for his disciples he unswervingly strove to light the path of sampradaya sangeetha of the highest order. He set high standards in teaching and our Vidyalaya rose to great heights under his stewardship and the Carnatic music scene in the city glowed with rare brilliance", he exhorted.

Initiated into vocal music at the age of seven by his brother Shri K. S. Krishna Iyer, Sangeetha Kalanidhi Shri. K. S. Narayanaswamy, continued his training under the tutelage of Shri. Sabesa Iyer and Shri. Ponniah Pillai at the Annamalai University, Chidambaram. He learnt Veena under Vidwan Shri. Desamangalam Subramania Iyer and mrudangam under Shri. Ponniah Pillai. He was a lecturer



in Veena at his alma mater from 1937 to 1946. Later, at the invitation of Her Highness Maharani Sethu Parvathi Bai of Travancore Palace, he took up lecturership in Veena at the Swati Thirunal Music Academy under the Principalship of Sangeetha Kalanidhi Semmangudi Shri. Srinivasa Iyer and assisted him in publishing Swathi Thirunal's Krithis. He was the Principal of Swati Thirunal Music Academy until 1970 and the Principal of Sri Shanmukhananda Sangeetha Vidyalaya Mumbai from 1970 to 1985. He was the recipient of several awards including the State Award of Kerala, State Award of Tamil Nadu, National Award of Central Sangeetha Natak Academy, Padma Bhushan and Sangeetha Kalanidhi.

The Sri Shanmukhananda Principal K. S. Narayanaswamy Centenary Vainika Award is the first of its kind for two reasons – it is the only award instituted in memory of Shri. K. S. Narayanaswamy in Mumbai and reportedly the only one exclusively for veena artistes. The award comprising a cash prize of Rs. 50,000 with a citation was presented to Shri. Ramesh by Dr. Shankar who also honoured him with a *ponnadai*. He was also presented with the Sabha's customary giant size brass lamp.

Hailing from a musical family, Shri. Ramesh commenced his training in Veena at the age of nine under his father Shri S. Narayanaswamy Iyer, a senior disciple of Sangeetha Kalanidhi Mudikondan Shri Venkatarama Iyer. An 'A' grade artiste of All India Radio Chennai, he has presented several solo and group veena concerts as also jugalbandis in India and abroad. He has performed widely in instrumental ensemble with violinist vidushi A. Kanyakumari. He has won several awards and recognitions and has also been honoured as the Asthana Vidwan of Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam and Sringeri Sri Sarada Peetam.

While accepting the award Shri Ramesh said that it was a special day for him. "It is a great honour to receive this award and I owe it to the blessings of my parents and Sri Kanchi Mahaswamy. I am not sure if I have the competence to talk about Shri K. S. Narayanaswamy. I will only say that his core achievement was the great Sishya parampara he has created all over the country and the world."



(l to r) Palladam Shri. Ravi (mridangam),  
Mudikondan Shri. S. N. Ramesh and Kum. Sowmya (veena),  
Shri. K. Murali (ghatam)

The award function was followed by Shri. Ramesh's veena concert ably supported by his daughter Kum. Sowmya on veena and vocal, Palladam Shri. Ravi on mridangam and Trichy Shri. K. Murali on ghatam.

Shri Ramesh commenced his concert with *Mahaganapatim* (Nattai) embellished with crisp kalpana swaras. This was followed by *Sri Vishwanatham* (Chaturdasa ragamalika of Sri Muthuswamy Dikshitar), and Sri

Thyagaraja's *Sashivadana* (Chandrajyothi). *O Rangasayee* in Kambhoji was the center piece which was rendered with elaborate raga alapana and kalpana swaras, gracefully bringing out the raga nuances. However, the audience missed the tanam, which is an integral part of all veena concerts. *Bhaja Govindam* (ragamalika), *Bho Shambho* (Revati) a composition of Swami Dayananda Saraswathi, who had passed away recently, came next and the concert was concluded with Maitreem Bhajatha.

*Janaki Krishnamoorthy is a journalist and a veena artiste based in Mumbai. She is a disciple of Smt. Kalyani Sharma.*

## Gizmos and Gurus

Dr. Sakuntala Narasimhan

Ask any musician, teacher or performer, especially of the older generation, and he or she will tell you about how the guru-shishya relationship has changed over the years. The modern generation, you will be told, doesn't have the kind of loyalty to the teacher that earlier generations of disciples used to have – were forced to have, in fact. Offend the guru even in a small way, even unintentionally, and that will be the end of the teaching. The offending disciple will be banished out of sight, forever.

Today, it is the teachers who have to 'adjust' to the convenience of the learners. Tch, tch. No respect for the guru. Agreed, there is an element of truth in this indeed – and I have myself experienced it. Where once it was not done to speak up before gurus, much less question their methods or pronouncements, today my NRI student who comes wanting to be taught "rahgah music" (intoned with an American nasal twang) sits chewing gum, and prefers to sit on the sofa because it is inconvenient to sit cross-legged on the floor in her tight jeans (while I am seated on the floor).

As I conceded, the old level of unquestioning respect is obsolete. But I am wondering whether modern gadgets and mechanical conveniences are to blame for this. Consider this – once upon a time, before records and recorders became available, the only way to listen to a guru performing, was to wait till he or she gave a live performance. One had to go to the venue and wait for the recital. Today, one can flip a CD into the player and press a button, and your guru will sing for you. With the press of a button, you can also shut the guru's mouth whenever you please. With recording facilities in mobile phones, one can even record at will, without the knowledge of the performer. Leading musicians often announce before a performance that cell phones are to be switched off, but I have seen people in the audience quietly recording the live recital, which means they can replay the concert whenever they wish, without having to pay for the pleasure of listening to good music. In effect, the guru is at the mercy, the beck and call of the disciple, not the other way round.



Whether it is the radio or a CD player or a download from the internet, the guru can be 'summoned' at will – and shut off at will too. The music in turn becomes devalued, because it is no longer so precious that it has to be grabbed when available. Anything that is freely available becomes less precious, compared to something that one has to go out of one's way to obtain. Gadgets, then, cheapen the value of what the guru imparts, even if those same gadgets also help preserve the music for posterity (which was not possible in the days of Thyagaraja or even Naina Pillai of more recent times).

When a student records a lesson, there is a tendency to give less than 100 percent attention to the live lesson, because there is always the recorded version to revert to later, so why bother? A disciple of two generations ago could not afford to be less than 100 percent attentive during a lesson because the guru may not repeat the phrase or line. Gadgets, in that sense, encourage a lackadaisical approach to the process of learning.

What my teachers like Brindamma said about notation being an unwelcome development because the nuances cannot be written down, applies today, a generation later, equally to gadgets. I forbid my students from recording lessons, but what is to prevent one of them from leaving the cell phone inside her handbag and quietly getting it all on record? Ustad Rashid Khan, the most popular

musician of Hindustani music today, charges fabulous sums as fees for each concert – but I have seen audiences quietly recording live performances on mobiles and sharing it with others. Gadgets cheapen the art. It is like a xerox machine enabling one to make colour copies of original works of art by great masters. Prints do not have the same value as an original, but when the copier is faithful and sophisticated, what does it matter whether it is an original or a reproduction?

Mass produced textiles are likewise said to be less valuable than individually, handmade weaves where no two pieces are alike. The power machines make possible in a trice, what an artisan took months to design and produce with his hands. So also, machines that can spew out music by the masters whenever you want, make the master less valuable compared to earlier times when one had to wait to hear the master. Even Emperor Akbar is said to have gone to the forest where Swami Haridas dwelled, to wait to hear the saint musician perform, because Haridas did not care to come to the city to sing at the durbar. Had gadgets been available in those days, not just the emperor but even the watchman at the palace gates could have treated himself to the pleasure of making Swami Haridas sing for him whenever he felt like listening to music.

I know of music competitions where not only the contestants' singing but also their competence in tuning the tambura were part of the test. Tuning the conventional tambura called for a keen sense of pitch, and a developing a keen sense of pitch is a vital part of music. Today, with electronic tamburas, there is no need to tune it, one just turns it on (and it will even switch to madhyama sruti when needed), they are a huge convenience, no doubt, (like instant or frozen foods) but there still are competitions where electronic drones are not permitted because fine tuning skills of a performer are supposed to be tested.

Gadgets devalue even the performer's role – I have seen vocalists perform on stage with a laptop in front, prompting them and providing reminders that call for no spontaneity. Are we coming close to a stage where a musician will have pre-recorded concerts, carefully edited and polished, switched on, with the artiste just having to lip sync, as film stars do with playback singers? In which case, there will never be an "off colour day" for the performer. Will that be a good thing? So where do we draw the line, in employing gadgets and modern technology in a creative art? I once did an assignment on the place of modern technology in the teaching of classical music. Without exception, all the leading artistes I interviewed insisted that there can be no substitute to face-to-face interaction and live teaching. But as I said, it is a matter of where one draws the line – surely, amplifiers and microphones are a boon because they enable thousands to listen to a live performance whereas without mikes only a small roomful of listeners can have the pleasure – although there were artistes like the late legendary Paighat Mani Iyer who objected to even microphones.

Whatever the individual preferences, one thing is clear – gurus and gizmos do not go together, as far as nuanced teaching is concerned. At least for now. But wait - if you have used GPS while driving, you would have heard the gizmo chide you when you miss a turning in the road, and tell you to make a correction. Who knows, the day may not be far off when a gadget speaks up to point out where you have gone wrong. So you won't need a live teacher.....

*Dr. Sakuntala Narasimhan is a Bengaluru-based journalist, musician and consumer rights activist.*

## ERRATA

The following errors have occurred in the July-Sept.2015 issue of Shanmukha:

The name of Mr. Easwaran/ Easwaran Sir has been erroneously referred to on page 65 which may be read as Shri Sadasivam.

The photo of Sarojini Naidu has been wrongly captioned as Rukmini Devi Arundale on page 98.

The song Kurai Onrum Illai has been attributed to Kalki Krishnamoorthy on page 119 whereas it is written by Rajaji.

We regret the errors and apologise for any inconvenience caused due to the same.



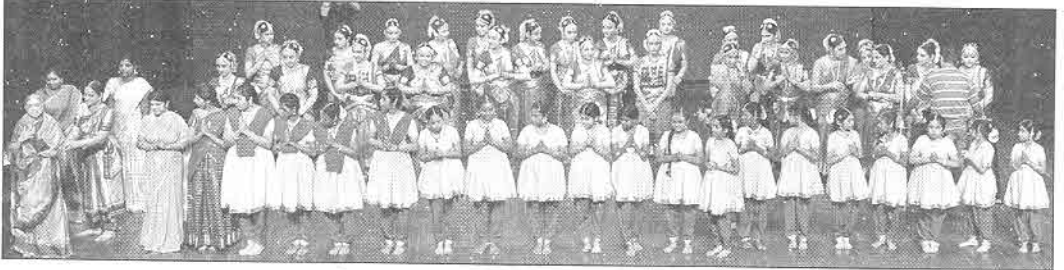
## The fountainhead from where the stream flows

Jaishree Rao

Guru Rajee Narayan is a rare combination of Bharatanatyam guru, singer, composer and choreographer, with the unique distinction of teaching not only Bharatanatyam, but also Carnatic Music, Natya Shastra and Nattuvangam. She has worked diligently all her life doing the one thing that comes natural to her – teaching. Fifty years ago, she founded her dance and music institution, Nritya Geethanjali and it is with great joy that her students celebrated this important landmark this year, through several events.

With the encouragement of connoisseurs and patrons of the fine arts like Dr. V. Shankar, who have helped her reach this milestone, Guru Rajee, with unflagging enthusiasm, decided to celebrate the Swarna Utsav, the golden jubilee of her institution, through three events that would ensure the participation of many students.

The first event was on Friday, 6th February, 2015 at Bharat Ratna Dr. M. S. Subbulakshmi Auditorium, Mumbai. Every child of the institution was on stage attired in the colours of the Swarna Utsav, including music and nattuvangam students, giving brief demonstrations of their skills. The dance items that followed included a Kummi and a Kolattam from Guru Rajee's vast repertoire of folk dances. It was a happy event that every student surely will cherish forever. The second event was a classical Carnatic music concert by Guru Rajee's senior student, Prabha Hari, on Friday, 20th March, 2015 at Jasubhai Convention Hall in the Shanmukhananda complex. Prabha is a fine musician who also provides vocal support for dance and has innovated new techniques in teaching music to school children.



Students of Guru Rajee Narayan taking a bow



(l to r) Smt. Anita Ratnam, Smt. Darshana Jhaveri,  
Guru Kalyanasundaram Pillai, Guru Rajee Narayan,  
Dr. Kanak Rele and Dr. V. Shankar

The culmination of the Swarna Utsav was on Sunday, 16th August, 2015 at Sri Shanmukhananda Chandrasekarendra Saraswathi Auditorium, when Guru Rajee's disciples from all over the world presented the dances that they had learnt from her. They came from New Delhi, Chennai, Bengaluru, Satara, Hyderabad and from out of India-Cleveland, Illinois, Maryland, Boston, Hongkong, Dubai, Istanbul... They came especially to participate in and contribute to this event. Dignitaries on the dais spoke volumes about her creativity. The hall was packed; the audience, appreciative. It was an

immensely satisfying moment in time; a rich new experience for the little ones and a walk down memory lane for the seniors. Students have taken wing and flown; only to set up branches of their beloved institution all over the world, becoming natural ambassadors of a rich tradition.

Guru Rajee has served as board member of the University of Mumbai for over two decades and as the external examiner for the Bachelors and Masters degrees in the Fine Arts courses (BFA and

MFA). She has been an examiner of dance thesis for Ph.D. Her creativity was brought to the foreground when she started writing lyrics for dance, composing music and doing the choreography. On 26th September, 1985, her first book of 25 songs for Bharatanatyam, Nriya Geeta Mala was released in Mumbai and later, in Delhi. In the following years, she presented a second volume of 31 songs and other books. This has earned her the title of *Vaggeyakara*, one of the few women in recent times to write exclusively for Bharatanatyam. She has released several music CDs and over the years, her songs have gained popularity in India and abroad. Today, her Kalyani varnam, *Gokula Bala* is a favourite amongst dancers and teachers like Mythili Prakash, Chennai and Chandrabhanu, Melbourne, to name a few.

In 1998, the Government of Maharashtra bestowed on Guru Rajee, the Lifetime Achievement Award, Raja Sanskritik Puraskar for Dance. In 2006, Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts and Sangeetha Sabha conferred on her the Bharat Ratna Dr. M. S. Subbulakshmi Best Teacher of the Year Award. In 2011, she received the Tagore Akademi Puraskar from Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi. This was indeed an important recognition of her creative work.

Dance and music are life itself to Guru Rajee. She breathes music and dance; continues to write poetry, create new songs and present new choreographies. Luckily for us, her students, the muses have decided to befriend her forever.

*Jaishree Rao is a dedicated Bharatanatyam dancer and teacher. She has learnt from Smt. Vyjayanthimala Bali and Guru Rajee Narayan.*

**FORM IV**

**(See Rule 8 of Press & Registration of Book Act)**

- |  |   |
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I, Shri V. S. Amarnath Sury, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

SIR

M. V. Swaroop



◀ Dr. N. Ramani, Carnatic Flautist

In a dingy hotel in Kozhikode, with the air-conditioning groaning in a manner that showed its age, at 1 am, exhausted and exhilarated at once, I saw why Ramani Sir's music was what it was. He was nearly 80, was on the last leg of a three-city travel, had slept for barely four hours the previous night on a train, but he was still fresh and excited as ever—he had discovered a new *kanakku*.

That morning, the concert organiser's son had played the mridangam and Sir had listened with great interest. Sir loved listening to young musicians; in his Ramani's Academy of Flute (RAF), I have seen him listen to children playing *Vara veena* with full attention and then offer them tips or a word or two of encouragement. This boy, playing the mridangam, was not a rank novice. He had played in a few concerts around the area, and had, in Sir's words, "great sense of *naadam*". But the poor boy's *korvai* flopped that morning. As hard as he tried, in three or four attempts, he could never get it right, and neither Sir nor me could understand what he was doing wrong.

At lunch, Sir said, "We have to figure this out, pa. Why did he not get it right?" He didn't take his afternoon nap. He was pacing around the house, counting the *kanakku* on his fingers. One of Sir's favourite jokes, which he used to deliver with a twinkle in his eye, was about how someone had told a musician obsessed with *kanakku*, "If you keep on counting your fingers, you won't have any left to count money." Despite this joke, one of Sir's obsessions was musical mathematics. And that day, it was that boy's botched-up *korvai*.

By evening, we had two or three ideas on what the boy had wanted to play, but Sir was not happy with any of them. He said that they were bland. That evening, he had a concert, where he had played the most majestic *Kamakshi* swarajati in Bhairavi you would ever hear. Fifteen minutes after the concert ended, he told me, "Eat quickly, we have to discuss that *korvai*." I had been really looking forward to getting some sleep after the concert, but sleep was last on Sir's mind.

Sir barely ate anything, rushing through course after course to get back and work on that *korvai*. When we got back to our hotel, he gave me a five minute bathroom-break, but that was it. After that, I was made to sit at the table and write down as ideas flowed from him. He would toss off one casually, something really beautiful, and dismiss it for some reason or the other. Gems poured out endlessly, all variations on the wrong *korvai* that the boy had played. After almost two hours, Sir had settled on one idea. We spent the next hour developing it into a veritable *kuraippu* and *korvai*. It was 1 am when this exercise ended, and Sir declared, "Ok, it's late. Let's sleep!"

Once, while driving to a wedding in a car, we were listening to a recording of GNB singing Kalyani, and Sir made me pause it suddenly. He said, "Notice that *gandharam*?" and sang it again for me, accentuating its distinctiveness. "That's the difference between Kalyani and Shankarabharanam. If you shake it like that, it's Kalyani. Otherwise, it's Shankarabharanam." Then, for the next ten minutes, he had alternated between Kalyani and Shankarabharanam – two ragas separated on paper by their ma-s – without ever touching the ma. "You need only da, ni, ri and ga to make Kalyani," he said.

Sir's brilliance lay in identifying the essence of any raga, like this, in very clear terms. Once, I had asked him if some kind of phrase was allowed in Atana. I had heard a musician sing it, but it had not fit in with what I had read about the raga. As if he had prepared for an exam, he then recounted what two books said about Atana. He had dismissed all this with a wave of his hand and had played Atana on the flute for three or four minutes. "This is Atana, pa. It doesn't matter what it is a janyam of, or what



the arohanam-avarohanam or lakshanam is. You understand this feel of the raga, you'll know what is allowed and not allowed." This was his approach to every kind of raga, scale-based or phrase-based. In fact, his music is ample proof that he was alien to the idea of a 'scale-based' raga. He never engaged in traipsing up and down a scale in virtuoso jugglery. His interpretations of Keeravani, Dharmavati and Charukesi come immediately to mind. For him, a raga was always about its musical identity. His music was about finding new meaning within a raga's personality while making sure he did not morph it into something else altogether. This is the reason why it never took more than a phrase with Sir to tell what raga he was playing.

Sir was a genius, yes. But behind that genius, lay a mind that could think of nothing but music. His music was a product of an obsession – with art, with expression, with practice, with perfection. Even the last time I met him, when I took him to the hospital for a check-up, while waiting for the doctor, he gave me two or three ideas to work with.

This is what we must learn from Sir – if we make what we love a part of our every living breath, it will live on for generations after us.

*M. V. Swaroop, a practising lawyer at Madras High Court, is a writer and is also a Carnatic flautist. He is a student of Dr. N. Ramani and has performed along with his guru in numerous concerts apart from being a soloist.*



## शानमुक्ता

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Tukkada 10

## Quiz on Sangeeta and Natya<sup>1</sup>

1. In the Charanam of his Abhoghi kriti *Sabhapatikku* Gopalakrishna Bharati refers to three pulaiyars (*pulaiyar moovar* – three Dalits) who attained salvation. Who are they?
2. Mention the three distinguished disciples of Patnam Subrahmanya Iyer.
3. When did the swara notations of Carnatic music appear first in writing?
4. Which is the kriti that has all the 108 names of the Lord?
5. Prathama ghanapanchakam ragas refer to Nattai, Gowla, Arabhi, Sri and Varali. What are Dwitiya ghanapanchaka ragas?
6. There are three that are considered outstanding among musical instruments and are called Vadyatraya. What are they?
7. How many gamakas are mentioned in Sarangadeva's *Sangita Ratnakara*?
8. Who wrote the popular lyric *Pattukkoru Pulavan Bhartiyada*?
9. Where does Tyagaraja refer to Bhadrachalam Ramadas as a 'Dheera'?
10. Madurai Mani Iyer never sang Tyagaraja's *Nidhichala Sukhama* (Kalyani) and *Grahabalamemi* (Revagupti). Why?
11. Who composed the incidental music for Wedding March in the *Midsummer Night's Dream* of Shakespeare, which is played in church weddings?
12. Who is the musicologist to whom the solfa system of the West (do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, ti) is attributed?
13. What is *tatkar*?
14. What did Tyagaraja compose for the *Yakshagana* stage?
15. In the past, males played female roles in Kuchipudi dance-dramas. Who introduced women into this Art form?

<sup>1</sup>The objective of the column is not only to test the knowledge of the readers but also to supplement it. They are welcome to send dissenting letters with supporting evidence, if they do not agree with the answers on page 45. It is important for keeping the record straight.

## ReaderSpeak

I am glad to see a qualitative improvement in the presentation of our house journal. The articles are topical and informative. However, the quality of the cover is an old design which can look brighter and better. Please do the needful.

**K. V. Satyamurty**

Just got the special issue on M. S. Thanks. I don't know how you put together such a stupendous amount of material. Hats off to you. In the list of benefit concerts she gave, there is one missing - I was present when she sang in aid of our (Madras) school, in Delhi, around July-August 1948. My mother was pregnant with my brother Raj Narayan (who makes Radel electronic tamburas). So she sent me to M.S.'s concert with some friends. Nehru was present, also Rajaji (I recall how she stood up suddenly in the middle of 'Arul purivai karunai kadaley' because Rajaji (then governor general) entered. This was the concert where Nehru said, "I am only the prime minister while she is the queen of music". I was 7 years old and I remember distinctly. He probably repeated that comment again at a later concert too. That concert is not listed in Shanmukha (whoever gave you that list, forgot it). Next day M. S. and Radha (she in daavani) visited the school and went from class to class. Perhaps she has given many more such benefit performances too.

**Dr. Sakuntala Narasimhan**

Vandanam! Chi. Vidyasagar Rao impressed me as a knowledgeable person. His speech is newsworthy. He has commended the Fellowship given to 50 young artists at the valedictory function of the festival and also the grant of rupees One lakh per year for 3 years as Fellowship for 50 young artists. The Governor calls it magnanimous and lauds the programme to promote promising young artistes.

**N. Hariharan, Coimbatore**

Your latest edition of 'Shanmukha' M.S. Subbulakshmi Centenary special is simply superb. I have heard a lot of her kutcheries and your journal made me very nostalgic.

The Sabha did not have a building of its own and most of the performances were held in the South Indian School hall, Brahminwada Road. We lived almost opposite to the school and I heard M. S. for the first time when I was a girl of 8 years. I remember vividly her *Aadu raathey* and *Vaanathin meedhu*. The Brigas in the Charanam held me spell bound and I told my father that he should take me to all her kutcheries when she comes to Bombay and he did. Sometimes I could not sleep because her mesmerising voice kept ringing in my ears making sleep impossible.

I know M. S. only as a vocalist, but the details given in your magazine and her personal traits, humility and Bhakti made me wonder if she is really human or an angel.

Had an opportunity to sit next to her during Kalanidhi Narayanan's marriage. Radha was with her and she asked about the jewel Radha was wearing. *Ippo thaan vanginen, nannaa irukka*. I was thrilled to hear these words. She is normal like all of us.

My mama V. Rajagopalan was one of the staunchest supporters of the Sabha and has done a lot of work for the Sabha also. I also remember Mr. Natarajan of the Taj group.

It was the firm belief at that time that my mama should collect the first advertisement. You might not have seen them. But they really worked hard. My mama did his best to get a nice amount from the advertisement for the annual souvenir.

Tears will automatically flow when I hear *Kurai Onrum Illai*. Unfortunately, did not get an opportunity to hear her sing this song in a kutcheri but seeing it in T.V. is good enough.

I am 80 now and nostalgic memories come back when I saw your journal.

May God bless all of you.

**Smt. Radha Rajagopal, Chennai**

### WRITE TO US!

**We would love to get to know you, dear reader, and hear your views, suggestions and thoughts on the journal or any topic related to the performing arts.**

**Please email us at : [bhamusic22@gmail.com](mailto:bhamusic22@gmail.com)**

**OR**

**write in to us at : Plot No. 292, Comrade Harbanslal Marg, sion (E),**

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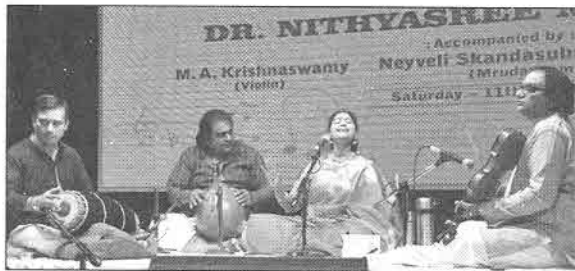


## Sabha Roundup

Report

### Concert of Dr. Nithyasree Mahadevan - 11<sup>th</sup> July, 2015

Nalini Dinesh



(l to r) Neyveli Shri. Skandasubramanian (mridangam),  
Dr. S. Karthick (ghatam), Dr. Nithyasree Mahadevan (vocal),  
Shri. M. A. Krishnaswamy (violin)

Beginning with Kedaragowla varnam and the Bowli kriti of Muthuswamy Dikshitar *Shree Parvathi Parameshwarau Vande*, Nithyasree sang elaborate kalpanaswaras at *Rama nama* in the Janaranjani kriti *Smarane Sukhamu*. The vocalist showed some strain during the Dhanyasi alapana which seemed to have too much vibrato on nishadam. Dhanyasi alapana by violinist M. A. Krishnaswamy was good and the chosen kriti was Papanasam Sivan's *Balakrishnan Padamalar*. This was followed by Atana alapana and a lively rendition of Oothukkadu Venkatakavi's *Madhura Madhura Venu Geetham*. The vocalist really came into form in her Pantuvarali alapana in which she touched ati-tara shadja. Alapana by the violinist was good. The Thyagaraja kriti *Raghuvara Nannu* was rendered with a structured niraval at *Manasuna Neeke* marked by good single avartana mel kala elaboration. The swara kuraippu at panchamam was also good. The highlight of Nithyasree's concert was an elaborate and evocative alapana of Kapi bringing out the essence of the raga. Only the extended halts on sadharana gandharam marred the beauty a little. After an excellent tanam by both vocalist and violinist with mridangam accompaniment from tara shadjam, a pallavi in Adi tala with 1/4 idam ateeta eduppu was sung with sahitya *Kaliyuga Varada Kanda Kumara Kadivela Gurupara Shanmukha Parama Dayala*. The uttarangam was in 1/2 idam of first veechu. Kalpana swaras were sung at various points like *Kaliyuga, Kanda, Kumara*. The swaras were in a ragamalika consisting of a multitude of ragas-Hamsadhvani, Hindolam, Ranjani, Mohanam, Karnataka Shuddha Saveri, Shuddha Dhanyasi, Begada, Dwijavanti, Hamsanaadam, Kambhoji, Behag, Neelambari, Sivananjani, Revati, Nattai, Gowla, Arabhi, Varaali - this list is by no means exhaustive! There was perfect quicksilver change of ragas and the crowning glory was an intricate edakku korvai and a porutham in the ending. An excellent thani avartanam came as expected from Neyveli Skandasubramanian and Dr. S. Karthick.

### Concert of O. S. Thyagarajan - 12<sup>th</sup> July, 2015

Nalini Dinesh



(l to r) Dr. K. Ashok (mridangam), Madippakkam Shri. A. Murali (ghatam),  
Shri. O. S. Thyagarajan (vocal), Mullaivasal Shri. G. Chandramouli (violin)

It was an all-Thyagaraja concert that was presented by O. S. Thyagarajan, who expressed his devotion and passion for Thyagaraja in a short speech during the concert. *Brochevarevare* (Shriranjani) and *Naradagana Lola* (Athana) were embellished with interesting patterns in the short avartana kalpana swaras. The prati-madhyama raga chosen for elaboration was *Varaali (Karuna Elagante)*. Interestingly, kalpana swaras sung at pallavi were in Semmangudi style. The beautiful Brindavana Saranga kriti *Kamalaaptakula* was rendered by O. S. Thyagarajan with perfect diction. This veteran artiste has an amazing voice range and his shruti

alignment is perfect and effortless even in the upper octave. These aspects were amply demonstrated in a very evocative Reetigowla alapana preceding *Cheraravademiraa*. The other notable feature in the alapana was a very well-done nyaasam around madhyamam. Mullaivasal Chandramouli's alapana was also good. Only short avartana swaras were sung and with different poruthams at *Dalachi kara*. Next came *Ramaabhirama* in Darbar which was sung with kalpana swaras at pallavi. Kalyani alapana and *Amma Ravamma* followed with an extended niraval as well as kalpana swaras. Surutti alapana was good, though surprisingly, some parts sounded like Andolika; this was true of the violinist's response as well. A rare kriti in Surutti *Rama Daivama* was rendered. *Sattaleri* in Naganandini was followed by an excellent Todi alapana which was again marked by effortless singing even at tara sthayi madhyamam. Grahabhedam at tarasthayi rishabham revealed Mohanam, and at madhyamam revealed Natabhairavi. There was an Ahiri flavour in the vocalist's elaboration around "DP" in avarohana krama. Violinist's Todi alapana was neat and sans grahabhedam. *Emi Jesithe* was rendered with neraval and kalpana swaras at *Vara Mantra Manyulaku*. Kuraippu was done neatly at tara sthayi shadjam. Thani avartanam was well-played by K. Ashok and Madipakkam Murali. *Laaliyugave* in Neelambari followed thani avartanam.

### Rising Stars Award Function - 26<sup>th</sup> July, 2015

Jayashri Suresh

The Sabha has started conducting, since last year, a music festival to provide a platform for young and promising talent in the sphere of Carnatic Music called the Rising Star Series. These performances are judged by a panel of judges and then one artiste is chosen to receive the award as the Rising Star.



(l to r) President Dr. V. Shankar, Shri. Pattabhirama Pandit, Ms. Sriranjani Santanagopalan (winners of the Rising Star Series, 2014) and Smt. Radha Nambodiri, Principal of Shamukhananda Sangeetha Vidyalaya

For the year 2014, there were two awardees chosen to share the honours: Ms. Sriranjani Santhanagopalan and Shri. Pattabhirama Pandit. The artistes were honoured by the Sabha on 26th July, 2015 which was followed by their performances.

Ms. Sriranjani was the first artiste to perform and she was accompanied by senior artistes Ms. Charulatha Ramanujam on the violin, Shri. H. S. Sudhindra on the mrudangam and Shri. K. V. Gopalakrishnan on the kanjira.

She commenced with the Saveri varnam *Sarasuda* set to Adi talam rendering it neatly in two speeds up to charanam. Next came a brief alapana in Arabhi ragam followed by a short sketch on the violin. She sang Tyagaraja's *Nadha Sudha* set to Rupaka talam with kalpana swarams for *Vedaagama* with swara patterns ending with 'saa ma' which was very apt for the phrase. Then came raga alapanain Todi with good brigaas and clean akaaram. The violin thani was exquisite and laden with bhava. Papanasam Sivan's *Thanigai Valar Saravanabhava* set to Khanda Chapu talam followed with excellent niraval showcasing varied patterns at *Thulli Vilaiyadi Varum* and very good kalpana swarams and kuraippu at 'sa', 2 counts from samam.



(l to r) Shri. H. S. Sudhindra (mrudangam), Shri. K. V. Gopalakrishnan (Kanjira), Ms. Sriranjani Santhanagopalan (winner of Rising Star Series Award 2014), Smt. Charulatha Ramanujam (violin)

The percussion thani was enthusiastically performed and was excellent. Next came a bhajan *Aaj Aayo* in Shyam Kalyan ragam, a Swathi Thirunal composition, set to Misra Chapu talam. She

rendered the bhajan beautifully with brilliant improvisations. Next came a tillana in Khamas composed by Lalgudi Jayaraman set to Adi talam which was crisply rendered and she concluded with a viruttam in Sindhubhairavi on Lord Muruga followed by the Tiruppugazh, *Anjuvidha Bhutamum*. It was a treat to listen to a mature performance with good overall presentation.

This was followed by the award distribution ceremony. Dr. V. Shankar gave the valedictory address and praised Ms. Sriranjani using the phrase 'Manoranjani, Rasikaranjani, Sriranjani'. He spoke about how the Sabha had taken a conscious decision to be youth centric and had decided to encourage and support fresh talent. These artistes, he hoped, would create a veritable 'uprising' and shake the root of classical music and move from being just 'rising stars' and become the torch bearers of this great Art form.



(l to r) Shri. H. S. Sudhindra (mridangam), Shri K. V. Gopalakrishnan (kanjira), Shri. Pattabhirama Pandit (winner of the Rising Star Series Award 2014), Smt. Charulatha Ramanujam (violin)

This was followed by the second performance of the evening by Shri. Pattabhirama Pandit who was accompanied by the same artistes. He began with Swati Thirunal varnam, *Sarasijanabha* in Mayamalavagowla ragam set to Adi talam rendering it in double speed upto charanam. He also sang kalpana swarams for the charanam line where the last swaram and korvai was in Semmgudi style. Then came a vilamba kala rendering of

Tyagaraja's *Ksheera Sagara Shayana* in Devagandhari ragam set to Adi talam. This was followed by an elaborate Pantuvarali raga alapana which was followed by an excellent violin thani full of bhava. He sang Swathi Tirunal's composition, *Sarasaksha*, set to Adi talam with niraval at *Bhamini* in 3 kalam and kalpana swarams with kuraippu at 'sa'. The swarams were a tad off beat (atiitha) in some places. This was followed by a Kambhoji raga alapana for which the violin thani was excellent. He sang Muthuswamy Dikshitar's *Shri Subrahmanyaya Namasthe* set to Rupaka talam where he sang kalpana swarams for *Vasavadi*, *Sakala* and *Bhoosuradi* alternating at 'da and sa' with complicated kanakku and a lot of vyavaharam in swara patterns.

The percussion thani that followed was excellent and the artistes played the 3 kalam for *Shri Subramanyaya* in the closing.

This was followed by an Ugabhoga and then Purandaradasa's Adi tala composition, *Mosadenallo* in Subhapantuvarali ragam and concluded the concert with a tillana.

### Independence Day Celebrations - 15<sup>th</sup> August, 2015

Jayashri Suresh

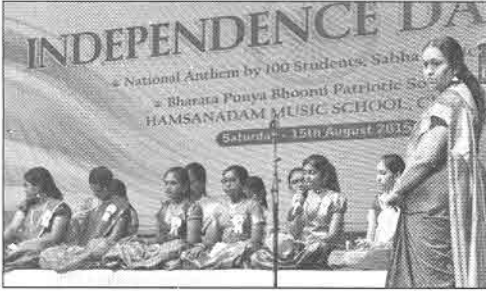


Students & staff of the Vidyalaya rendering the National Anthem



The Independence Day celebration of the Sabha started off with the rendering of the complete version of our National Anthem Jana Gana Mana with all the five stanzas being rendered by around 100 students and faculty of the Sangeetha Vidyalaya.

This was followed by the rendering of patriotic songs in a program titled Bharata Punya Bhoomi by 15 students of the Hamsanadam Music School, Chennai who had been trained by Dr. Shubha Ganesh, the daughter of Smt. Kalyani Ganesh.



Students of Hamsanadam Music School rendering patriotic songs

The program commenced with the song *Mannum Imaya Malai*, a composition of Mahakavi Bharatiyar in Bilahari ragam set to Adi talam. Next came a composition by Kallidaikurichi Shankaranarayana Iyer called *Desa Sevai Seyya* in Abhogi ragam set to Adi talam and was followed by *Ennarum Thainadu*, a composition in Simhendramadhyamam by Rajam Sitaraman. This was followed by a composition of Harikesanallur Muthaiah Bhagavathar called *En Annaye Bharatiye*, in Khamas ragam set to Adi talam in tirsra nadai after which came a composition by Mayuram Vishwanatha Iyer titled *Samarasa*

*Bharatha Samrajya* in Abheri ragam set to Adi talam. The next piece was the famous Papanasam Sivan composition, *Bharata Punya Bhoomi*, in Kuntalavarali ragam set to Adi talam and was followed by a ragamalika composition by Sumitranandan Pant. They sang 4 compositions of the great patriot, Mahakavi Subramanya Bharati one after the other. Beginning with *Kondu Nigazhuda* in Bhairavi ragam set to Adi talam in Tirsra nadai, they next sang the very popular Mohanam song *Viduthalai* set to Adi talam Tirsra nadai. This was followed by *Aduvome Palli Paduvome* in Mand ragam set to Adi talam and finally they sang *Thayin Manikodi*, a ragamalika set to Adi talam. The next came Mayavaram Vishwanatha Shastry's composition *Jayati Jayati Bharata Mata* in Khamas ragam set to Adi talam in tirsra nadai. There were brief raga alapana sketches for some of the compositions which were rendered in turns by the students. They concluded the program with an appeal for peace and strong self-will by singing Sethumadhava Rao's famous composition, *Shanti Nilava Vendum* in Tilang ragam set to Adi talam.

### Karnataka Sangeetha Ponmazhai Thiruvizha (16-08-2015 to 21-08-2015)

Jayashri Suresh

The Sabha had provided a veritable feast for the ears by organising a 'Karnataka Sangeetha Pon Mazhai Thiruvizha' - a six day music festival featuring artistes ranging from young promising stars to stalwarts and veterans. The Sabha also made arrangements for complimentary snacks, tea and coffee to be served to the listeners.

#### Day 1 : 16<sup>th</sup> August, 2015



(l to r) Patri Shri. Satish Kumar (mrudangam), Sri. Abhishek Raghuram (vocal), Sri. H. N. Bhaskar (violin)

The Festival was kickstarted by Shri. Abhishek Raghuram, one of the most promising and sought-after stars in the Carnatic music firmament. He was accompanied by Shri. H. N. Bhaskar on the violin, by Patri Shri. Satishkumar on the mrudangam and by Shri. Chandrashekara Sharma on the ghatam.

He began with a bhava-laden rendition of Syama Shastri's Todi swarajathi, *Rave*

*Himagiri* set to *Adi talam*. The repetition of the first sangathi in the *tara sthayi* added a meditative majesty to the piece. This was followed by an excellent rendition of Annamacharya's Shankarabharanam krithi, *Alarulu Guriyaka* set to *Adi talam*. The artiste's impressive voice range was clearly evident in the outstanding *Pantuvarali* raga alapana that followed which had a plethora of varied raga phrases and where the artiste could reach the *anumandra sthayi* with ease and clarity. The 'pa' varjya prayogams while handling the raga added *ranjakatva*.

The violin thani that followed was classy and full of rich, soulful strokes and the artiste handled the ragam bearing in mind Abhishek's style of singing. The Muthuswamy Dikshitar kriti *Ramanatham Bhajeham* set to *Rupaka talam* was presented with an elaborate *niraval* brimming with ideas at *Kumara Guruguha* followed by *kalpana swarams* displaying excellent *swara poruththam* and intricate *swara patterns* and did *koraippu* at 'pa'.

The *Kapinarayani* raga alapana that came next was a mind boggling vocal trapeze act which showcased this young artiste's effortless command which was followed by a scintillating violin alapana. He sang Tyagaraja's *Sarasasamadana* set to *Adi talam* with interesting improvised sangathis. Next came Syama Shastri's kriti *Kamakshi Nannu Brovave* in *Varali* set to *Misra Chapu talam* where he began from the *anupallavi Tamasameley Rave* and sang with excellent *bhavam* and sang *kalpana swarams* at *Naa Manavi* as well as *Vegame*. Next came Tyagaraja's composition *Dandamu Bettenura* in *Balahamsa* set to *Adi talam* which seems to be Abhishek's favourite as he had sung this in an earlier concert at *Nehru Center* in *Mumbai* as well. Then, he announced that he wanted to try something new and interesting and sang an alapana in a rare ragam called *Karmabhu* which is *Hindolam's* scale with a *prati madhyamam*. He sang a *ragamalika tanam* with *Shahana*, *Anandabhairavi* and *Huseni*. These traditional ragams juxtaposed with a new ragam made it novel. This was followed by a *pallavi Varuvayo Arulpurivayo Nee Guha Swaminatha* set to *Khanda Triputa talam* with *eduppu* at *samam* which he later converted to *Adi talam* and sang *sollukattu* in *kalpana swarams* after the thani *avartanam*.

The thani *avartanam* was a special treat as the artistes displayed excellent prowess and control which elicited a huge applause from the audience.

## Day 2 : 17<sup>th</sup> August, 2015



(l to r) Shri. D.R.S. Murthy (mridangam), Shri. Shyam Kumar (kanjira), Shri. D. Seshachary, Shri. D. Raghavachary and Shri. Dwaram Sathyanarayanarao (violin)

The second day of the Thiruvizha saw senior artistes, Hyderabad brothers, Shri. D. Seshachary and Shri. D. Raghavachary giving a concert accompanied by Dwaram Shri. Satyanarayana Rao on the violin, Shri. D. S. R. Murthy on the mridangam and Shri. K. Shyam Sundar on the kanjira.

They began with *Pachimiriyam Adiyappaia's* magnum opus *Bhairavi Ata talam varnam Viriboni*. This was followed by Tyagaraja's evocative kriti *Paramathmudu* in *Vagadheeshwari* ragam set to *Adi talam* which was rendered beautifully by the duo with a lot of *bhava*. Next came a classy *Harikambohoji* raga alapana by Seshachary where the essence of the ragam was captured by the artiste followed by the Tyagaraja kriti *Undethi Ramudu* set to *Rupaka talam* with *neraval* and *kalpana swarams* at *Tamasadi*. Then came a brief *Varali* raga alapana followed by Syama Shastri's kriti *Kamakshi* set to *Misra Chapu talam*. This was followed by a vintage *Todi* alapana where Seshachary began and was followed by Raghavachary singing it from 'ma'. The duo's ability to extract the essence of the ragam with their phrases was a treat to hear. They sang Dikshitar's kriti *Shri Krishnam Bhaja* set to *Adi talam* praising Lord Krishna at *Guruvayur* in the phrase *gurupavanapura* with a very short *niraval* and excellent *kalpana swarams* at *Pankajasana* with *kuraippu* at 'pa'.

The thani avartanam that followed this was crisp and well-executed by both artistes.

Then came Tyagaraja's Amrithavarshini kriti *Sasaseeruha Nayane* set to Adi talam with chittaswaram. Next came a ragam tanam pallavi in Bhairavi ragam with the words *Tamarasadala Netri Tyagarajuni Mitri* set to Tisra Eka talam in Khanda nadai with the eduppu at 2 counts after samam. Then came a padam *Cheliyane* set to Misra Chapu talam. Then came an extremely brief raga outline in Dwijavanthi laden with raga bhava followed by another padam *Taruni*, a Swati Thirunal composition set to Mishra Chapu talam. They sang Swathi Thirunal's mangalam Bhujaga Sayinoain which there were some errors in the sahiyam and concluded with the mangalam *Pavamaana*.

### Day 3 : 18<sup>th</sup> August, 2015



(l to r) Shri. K. V. Prasad (mridangam), Shri. R. Raman (morsing), Smt. Sudha Ragunathan (vocal) and Embar Shri. S. Kannan (violin)

The newly minted Padma Bhushan awardee Smt. Sudha Ragunathan performed on the third day. She was felicitated by the Sabha for receiving a Padma Award and in her acceptance speech where she thanked the Sabha, she mentioned that it was her 9th performance for the Sabha. She was accompanied by Embar Shri. Kannan on the violin, Shri. K. V. Prasad on the mridangam and Shri. R. Raman on the morsing.

She began with a viruttam from the Abhirami Andaadi and sang a varnam composed by Lalgudi Jayaraman, *Karunai Deivame Kaatharuley* in ragam Bowli set to Adi talam. This was followed by *Vaaranamukhane*, an Ambujam Krishna composition in Nattai ragam set to Adi talam where she sang intricate kalpana swarams at *Omkara Swarupa* with atita eduppu at 2 counts after the last *veechu*. Next came the Muthuswamy Dikshitar composition *Matangi* in Ramamanohari ragam (Rama Priya) set to Rupaka talam and sang niraval and kalpana swarams at *Ramamanohari Raakendu Shekari Sukhakari*. She chose an often heard and ancient piece, Tyagaraja's Abheri kriti *Nagumomu* set to Adi talam to be sung next. She followed this with an elaborate Todi alapana doing graha bhedom at 'ri' resulting in Mohanam. The violin thani was soothing but it was puzzling as to why the artiste chose not to showcase the griha bhedom. She sang Tyagaraja's composition *Jesinadella* set to Adi talam (1 kalai) and performed elaborate niraval at *Aasha Konnaathi* with kalpana swarams full of kanakku and also did griha bhedom there. It was baffling that an artiste, so deft and nimble in weaving kalpana swarams, chose not to showcase any sarva laghu swarams at all! The thani avartanam was excellent and elicited a lot of appreciation from the audience. Next came another old piece, *Singara velavan vandaan*, in Anandabhairavi set to Adi talam, a composition of Papanasam Sivan.

This was followed by a Khanda Jati Ata talam pallavi, *Paadame Tunai Nalinakanthimathi, Hemavathi Janani, Arul Nee, Amrutavarshini Unn Thiru*, showcasing the 3 ragams Nalinakanthi, Hemavathi and Amrutavarshini and converted it to Misra Chapu later. The pallavi showcased the artiste's prowess as a seasoned performer. She paid her homage to the recently departed Swami Dayananda Saraswathi by singing his famous composition, *Bho Shambho*, in Revathi set to Adi talam preceded by a viruttam *Kripa Samudram Sumukham Trinetrinam* in the same ragam praising Lord Shiva. Next she sang Kalki Krishnamurthy's vintage composition, *Maravene*, in Paras set to Adi talam. She sang yet another viruttam in Behag, *Anbe Shivamum* which sounded out of place before a tillana and concluded with Lalgudi Jayaraman's tillana in the same ragam set to Adi talam in tisra nadai.

### Day 4 : 19<sup>th</sup> August, 2015

One of the most gifted and brilliant performers of the new brigade and one of the youngest Sangeetha Kalandhi designate at age 47, Shri. Sanjay Subrahmanyam, showcased his enormous talent, prowess and his unstinting hard work towards his Art in an outstanding concert that was the



highlight of the festival. He was accompanied by Shri. S. Varadarajan on the violin, Neyveli Shri. R. Venkatesh on the mrudangam and Alathur Shri. Rajaganesh on the kanjira.



(l to r) Neyveli Shri. R. Venkatesh (mrudangam),  
Alathur Shri. Rajaganesh (kanjira),  
Shri. Sanjay Subrahmanyam and Shri. S. Varadarajan (violin)

He commenced the concert with his favourite ragam, Begada (he sings it in almost all concerts) by singing *Taamadam Enral Seriyo Nee Seiyyum*, a varnam composed by Tiger Varadachary set to Adi talam. Next came Tyagaraja's composition, *Paraloka Sadhaname* in Poorvikalyani ragam set to Adi talam with kalpana swarams at *Paraloka* with kuraippu at 'ga'. Next came a treat for those who were lucky to be present, an elaborate and majestic

Atana ragam alapana. The violin thani that followed was excellent. Swati Tirunal's *Shri Kumara Nagaralaye* set to Adi talam was excellently rendered replete with characteristic gamakas. He then sang Abhogi raga alapana which was like a textbook lesson showcasing varied patterns using all the special *pidippus* of the ragam. The violinist evoked the raga bhava in full measure in his exposition. Dikshitar's composition *Shri Lakshmi Varaham* set to Adi talam was rendered with scintillating kalpana swarams in 2 speeds at the pallavi with excellent poruthams. Then came Papanasam Sivan's Todi composition *Thanigai Valar* set to Khanda Chapu talam with excellent niraval patterns at *Tulli Vilaiyadi Varum* where he sang the word *Tulli* in different ways which gave the impression literally of a swaying peacock. Then came the piece de resistance of the concert - a Ragam Tanam Pallavi in Nattakurinji beginning with an outstanding raga alapana. The artiste's impressive vocal range, his mind-boggling talent, his penance and hard work unspooled in the exploration of a raga that is fairly difficult to explore due to its limited scope. But, that was no deterrent to this artiste who is in the prime of his career and he explored the raga in an exhaustive manner elaborating at every nyasa swara and brought out the splendid hues of this pleasing ragam. The literal shadowing done by the violinist by reproducing each and every phrase in his alapana added a sublime quality to this concert. This was followed by a brilliant tanam rendered with grace and dexterity and a pallavi, *Manathaal Unai Ninaiththaal* in praise of Goddess Saraswathi set to Khanda Jati Triputa talam with 2 avartanams and sang a ragamalika of Shudhdha Dhanyasi, Bahudari and Darbari Kanada (typical Hindustani style *taans*). This was followed by a percussion thani that was energetic, excellent and showcased their perfect synchronisation. The artiste's love for Tamil language was revealed in the crisp and correct enunciation of each word. Then came a rare Tamil composition of Muthaiah Bhagavathar *Mavur Valam Peruga Vanda Kaliyammaye* set to Adi talam in Tisra nadai. This was followed Ghanam Krishna Iyer's composition *Ennamo Vagaiyai* set to Adi talam rendered in a fast pace. Then came a ragamalika viruttam *Karuvutra Naal Mudalaga* in Dhanyasi and Kapi where the ragams were delineated in the viruttam with a lot of ranjakatva and beauty and was followed by Papanasam Sivan's composition *Eesan Anbar* set to Rupaka talam. Next came another viruttam *Kula Tharum Selvam* followed by an Azhwar Pasuram in Surutti and he concluded with mangalam.

#### Day 5 : 20<sup>th</sup> August, 2015



(l to r) Shri. Patri Satishkumar (mrudangam),  
Shri. Bhargav Halambe (kanjira), Shri T. V. Sankaranarayanan  
and Shri. Mahadevan (vocal), Shri. H. N. Bhaskar (violin)

The stalwart septuagenarian, Padma Bhushan Shri. T. V. Sankaranarayanan, showing no hint of his age, gave an energetic and full-throated performance accompanied by Shri. H. N. Bhaskar on the violin, Patri Shri. Satishkumar on the mrudangam and Shri. Bhargava Halambe on the kanjira and with vocal support provided by his son Shri. Mahadevan. The

annual music and dance competition prizes were distributed to winners by the maestro before the commencement of the concert.



(l to r) Smt. Radha Namboodiri (Principal, Shamukhananda Sangeetha Vidyalaya), Mr. Sridhar (Secretary), Shri. Aditya Madhavan (winner of the Tambura prize), Shri. T. V. Shankaranarayanan, Shri. Amarnath Sury (Convenor, Sangeetha Vidyalaya)

He commenced with a viruttam *Sudaroliye Pottri* in Nattai and sang the kriti *Pranatosmi Devam Vinayakam*, a composition by Tulasivanam in praise of Vinayakar at Guruvayur kshetram set to Adi talam with kalpana swarams for the pallavi. Next came Periasami Thooran's Saveri kriti *Muruga Muruga* set to Misra Chapu talam. This was followed by Tyagaraja's kriti in Darbar, *Mundu Venuga*, set to Adi talam with kalpana swarams for the pallavi. Next came a detailed Kalyani ragam alapana followed by a pleasing and well-executed violin thani. He sang a rarely heard kriti, *Shaaradey Varadey*, a composition of Veenai Seshanna and rendered niraval and kalpana swarams at *Vaani Veena Pustaka Paani* and sang both niraval and swarams in tisram, Then came a raga alapana in Kharaharapriya followed by an excellent violin thani and he sang Tyagaraja's magnum opus *Chakkani Raja* set to Adi talam with niraval and kalpana swarams at *Kantiki Sundara* with kuraippu at 'ri'. This was followed by a thani avartanam where the artistes displayed their prowess and command. Next, he sang a slokam *Poojaya*

*Raghavendraya* in Hamsanadam followed by the kriti *Mantra Phalam Adainden* set to Adi talam. This was followed by a composition of Muthu Tandavar in Andolika ragam, *Sevikka Vendum Aiyya*, set to Adi talam. He then sang the Hamsanandi composition of Papanasam Sivan, *Srinivasa Thiruvengada*, set to Adi talam by starting off with the various names of the Lord and began the song from the anupallavi singing *Dheena Sharanyan*. Then came another viruttam in Brindavana Saranga *Maal Maruga* and then he sang Periasami Thooran's composition *Kaliyuga Varadhan* in the same ragam set to Adi talam.

#### Day 6 : 21<sup>st</sup> August, 2015



(l to r) Trichur Shri. R. Mohan (mridangam), Shri. D. V. Venkatasubramanyam (ghatam), Shri. Srikrishna Mohan and Shri. Ramkumar Mohan (vocal), Shri. H. N. Bhaskar (violin)

violin, Trichur Shri. R. Mohan (their father) on the mridangam and by Shri. D. V. Venkatasubramanyam on the ghatam.

The last day saw the dynamic duo Shri. Srikrishna Mohan and Shri. Ramkumar Mohan, popularly known as the Trichur brothers give their first ever concert at this Sabha. Their rising popularity was amply evident in the crowds that thronged to listen to them and also in the fact that despite the late hour, everyone chose to wait until the very end to listen to them. They were accompanied by Shri. H. N. Bhaskar on the

They began with the varnam *Entho Prema* in Surutti ragam set to Adi talam and then sang Dikshitar's Malahari composition *Panchamatanga Mukha* set to Rupaka talam singing kalpana swarams for the pallavi. Then came a composition of Meenakshi Suta in Nattai ragam set to Adi talam, *Rakshamaam*, where they sang scintillating kalpana swarams at *Pakshivahana*. Then came the Sriragam kriti of Dikshitar, *Shri Varalakshmi Namasthubhyam* set to Rupaka talam where they sang kalpana swarams for the pallavi. This was followed by a fast-paced and lively *Manavyalakim*, the Tyagaraga kriti in Nalinakanthi set to Adi talam where they sang lightning-fast kalpana swarams for the pallavi which was enthusiastically enjoyed by the audience. They contrasted this with a relaxed and slow-paced Yadukula Kambhoji by singing Tyagaraja's *Srirama Jayarama* set to Khanda Chapu talam. Then came an elaborate Simhendramadhyamam raga alapana using a lot of panchama varjya prayogas

in the phrases. They sang Mysore Vasudevacharya's composition *Ninne Nammiti Naiyya* set to Misra Chapu talam with niraval and kalpana swarams at *Pannagendra Shayana*. The second and third speed niraval was very good. Strangely, the duo did not sing kalpana swarams in first speed and directly went on to sing second speed kalpana swarams with kuraippu at 'pa'. Next, they sang a composition by Dandapani Desikar, *Sinamadaiyaade Seerivizhaade*, in Bahudari ragam set to Adi talam. This was followed by an Ambujam Krishna composition *Guruvayurappane Appan* in Reetigowlai ragam set to Adi talam.

Then came a Ragam Tanam Pallavi in a Hindustani ragam Jog where they sang a 2-kalai Adi talam pallavi *Chetashri Ramam Chintaye, Jeemutha Shyamam*. Since it was an unusual ragam not often heard in a Carnatic concert, it elicited a lot of curiosity. The raga was beautifully explored using a lot of Hindustani *pakkads* and the violin thani was simply lustrous and grand. The tanam was sung in 3 speeds and the duo displayed their enviable voice quality and prowess. They did not do niraval and went straight to kalpana swarams singing in Anandabhairavi, Kedaram, Mand and Bilahari with a veritable cascade of swarams in trikalam tisram. The blend of these traditional ragams with a North Indian ragam like Jog created an unusual and novel juxtaposition. The thani avartanam that followed was excellent and a testament to the prowess and skill of the artistes.

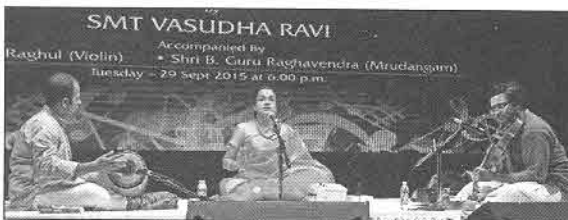
At this juncture, the President Dr. V. Shankar, deeply impressed by the duo's prowess and talent, decided to felicitate them and thus there was a break in proceedings while the felicitation ceremony happened. They were felicitated with the trademark of the sabha-the giant brass lamp and it was also announced that the duo would be conferred with Sri Shanmukha Sangeetha Siromani award on 26th Dec, 2015. Then came a moving Tamil viruttam *Petra Thai* in praise of the 3 pontiffs of the Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam. This was followed by Gopalakrishna Bharati's composition from Nandanar Charitram, *Pittam Teliya*, in Chenchuruti ragam set to Rupaka talam. Then came the evergreen Yaman composition by Vyasaraaya Tirtha, *Krishna Nee Begane Baro* set to Misra Chapu talam. Then came the famous Malayalam lullaby, *Omana Thingal Kidavo*, a composition of Irayimman Thampi in Kurinji ragam set to Misra Chapu talam which was sung in a soothing manner where they harmonised their voices. Then came another Hindustani ragam Natbhairav (similar to Sarasangi) where they sang the bhajan composed by Shri. Bilvamangala Thakur, *Govinda Damodara Madhaveti* and concluded with the mangalam *Pavamana*.

### Rising Stars Series - 2015 (29-09-2015 to 05-10-2015)

Jayashri Suresh

The Sri Shanmukhanada Fine Arts and Sangeetha Sabha provides a platform to support and encourage young and upcoming talent in the field of Carnatic Music by organising a musical program called the Rising Star Series where 14 artistes performed this year over 7 days and the best of the lot is chosen then to be presented with an award. The program featured 2 artistes on each day - one from 6.00 p.m. to 7.30 p.m. and the next from 7.45 p.m. to 9.15 p.m.

#### Day 1 : 29<sup>th</sup> September, 2015



(l to r) Shri. B. Guru Raghavendra, Smt. Vasudha Ravi, Shri. R. Raghul

The series commenced with a vocal performance by Smt. Vasudha Ravi, a M. S. Fellowship awardee, who was accompanied by Shri. R. Raghul, another M. S. Fellowship awardee on the violin and Shri. B. Guru Raghavendra on the mridangam. She began with the varnam *Ninnu Kori* in Vasantha ragam set to Adi talam. Next came a composition by N. S.

Ramachandran, *Shri Maha Ganapathe* in Abhogi ragam set to Khanda Chapu talam where she sang

kalpana swarams for the pallavi. The mrudangist understood the swara pattern formations and provided excellent accompaniment. Next came a rarely heard kriti of Muthuswamy Dikshitar in praise of the Goddess at Tiruchirappalli, Sugandhikuntalamba. The Rupaka tala kiti *Shri Sugandhi Kunthalambike* in Kuntalam ragam was rendered preceded by an elaborate raga alapana. Next came *Bhogeendra Shayinam*, the Swathi Thirunal composition in Kuntalavarali set to Khanda Chapu talam. This was followed by a Bhairavi raga alapana for which the violin thani was excellent. Syama Shastri's composition *Sari Evvaramma* set to Khanda Jampa talam with niraval and kalpana swarams at *Madhava Sodari*. The percussion thani was simply excellent and full of good naadam. Next came a composition of Purandaradasa, *Nandatanaya Govinda*, in Desh ragam set to Adi talam. She concluded the concert with a tillana composed by Lalgudi Jayaraman in Sindhu Bhairavi ragam set to Adi talam.



(l to r) Shri. B. Guru Raghavendra (mrudangam),  
Trichy Shri. V. Pradeep Kumar (vocal), Shri. R. Raghul (violin)

The second half saw a concert by Trichy Shri. Pradeep Kumar who was accompanied by the same artistes. Blessed with a felicitous voice that could glide effortlessly over 3 octaves, he began briskly with the Saveri varnam *Sarasooda* set to Adi talam and followed that by singing Papanasam Sivan's composition *Taitvamariya Tarama* in Reetigowlai ragam set to Adi talam. Then came a lightning fast

*Sarasamukhi*, Harikesanallur Muthaiah Bhagavathar's composition in Gouda Malhar ragam set to Khanda Chapu talam where he sang excellent kalpana swarams for the pallavi. Then came a beautiful Hamsadhvani raga alapana followed by the kriti *Palayashu Padmanabha*, a composition of Mysore vasudevacharya set to Adi talam tirsra nadai where he sang kalpana swarams at *Vasudeva*, a difficult place, extremely well. Then came a small sketch of Ranjani ragam followed by the kriti *Parama Pavana*, a composition of Meesu Krishna Iyer set to Adi talam. Next came an outstanding exploration of a vintage ragam - Kedaragowlai which is not often heard in kutcheris in the artiste's excellent voice. He gave *swaroopa* to the ragam using all the special *pidippus* that are used for Kedaragowlai and made the ragam stand out in all its majesty and glory. The violin thani that followed was exquisite and classy. Papanasam Sivan's composition *Samikku Sari Evvare*, a grand kriti set to Misra Chapu talam evoking Lord Krishna was rendered beautifully with excellent niraval and kalpana swarams at *Paarkadal Adanil*. This was followed by a viruttam in Tamil in Kapi ragam after which the famous composition of Papanasam Sivan, *Enna Tavam*, set to Adi talam was rendered evocatively. Then came the old favourite *Yeppo Varuvaro*, a Gopalakrishna Bharathi composition in Jonpuri ragam set to Adi talam. He then sang a beautiful Bagesri composition *Maamaduraipuri Vaazh Maharaniye* set to Adi talam and concluded the concert.

## Day 2 : 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2015



(l to r) Shri. B. Guru Raghavendra, Shri. V. Raghava Krishna,  
Shri. R. Raghul

The second day featured Shri. R. Raghava Krishna in the first half of the evening. He was accompanied by Shri. R. Raghul on the violin and Shri. B. Guru Raghavendra on the mrudangam. He commenced with one of Oothukadu Venkatasubbaiyer's compositions on Lord Ganesha, *Ananda Nartana Ganapathim*, a kriti in Nattai ragam set to Adi talam. This was followed by a

pleasing Arabhi raga alapana for which the violin thani was excellent and Muthuswamy Dikshitar's kriti *Shri Saraswati Namostute* in Rupaka talam was rendered. It was puzzling that the artiste chose a piece with Rupaka talam yet again when he sang *Tulasi Dala Mulache*, a composition of Tyagaraja



in Mayamalavagowlai set to Rupaka talam with niraval and kalpana swarams at *Sarasiruha Punnaga* which were neatly executed. One chakram from Maha Vaidyanatha Iyer's *Melaragamalika* set to Adi talam was chosen to be sung next. Then came a Kharaharapriya raga alapana where the artiste with his facile voice developed the ragam extremely well using good sancharas. The violin thani that followed was precise and well executed. Tyagaraja's composition *Chakkani Raja* was chosen where the artiste started from the phrase *Raja Margamu* but did not sing the tara sthaya sangatis. The niraval and kalpana swarams at *Kantiki Sundara* were excellent which was followed by a brilliant thani avartanam. Then came a piece in Behag ragam, *Keshava Narayana Vasudeva*, set to Misra Chapu talam and he concluded the concert with the popular Sindhu Bhairavi composition of Madurai T. Srinivasan, *Karunai Deivame Karpagame*, set to Adi talam.

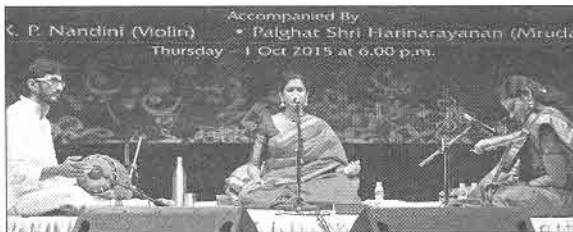


(l to r) Shri. B. Guru Raghavendra (mridangam), Shri. A. Narayanan (vocal), Shri. R. Raghul (violin)

The second half featured Shri. A. Narayanan, awardee for the best talent promotion concert for 2009-2010, who was accompanied by the same artistes. Beginning with *Neeve Gati Yani*, a varnam composed by Lalgudi Jayaraman in Nalinakanthi ragam and set to Adi talam, he proceeded to sing a brief alapana in Shahana ragam for which the violin thani

was exquisite. The enunciation of the sahyam in Papanasam Sivan's composition, *Shri Vatapi Ganapathiye* set to Adi talam was very good thus evoking meaningful bhavam and the kalpana swarams rendered for the pallavi was good. The Dharmavati raga alapana that came next was sung in a light classical manner and furthermore had a lot of shades of Kalyani ragam in certain phrases! The violin alapana however was pure Dharmavati. Muthuswamy Dikshitar's kriti *Parandhamavathi Jayathi* set to Rupaka talam was rendered with kalpana swarams for *Jayathi* starting 5 counts from samam. The violin accompaniment with porutham swarams for the same was a treat for the ears. Then came a slokam *Sharada Sharadambhoja*, followed by the pleasing Mohana Kalyani composition of Ramamurthy Rao, *Sangeeta Saamrajya Sancharini*, set to Adi talam with chittaswarams. This was followed by a Madhyamavathi raga alapana, once again with a tilt towards light classical and with many trespasses into Andolika! The violin alapana was mercifully a vintage and unsullied Madhyamavathi rendered with a lot of grace and depth. The artiste began singing Tyagaraja's *Ramakatha Sudha* set to Adi talam (2 kalai) when suddenly a terrible mistake occurred. He started singing the charanam of another kriti, *Palinchu Kamakshi*, an unfortunate but grave blunder and merrily continued so and could not course correct until the violinist pointed out the error! He then sang niraval at *Bhamamani* and resuscitated the performance with a lot of vyavaharam in kalpana swarams and also sang tisram 2nd speed and did kuraippu at 'ri' on samam. This was followed by a scintillating thani that added sparkle and vigour to the evening. Purandaradasa's composition, the much-heard *Jagadodharana* in Kapi set to Adi talam came next where he began from *Yashode*. This was followed by a Lalgudi Jayaraman tillana in Revathy ragam set to Adi talam and then mangalam.

### Day 3 : 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2015



(l to r) Palghat Shri. Harinarayanan (mridangam), Ms. Revathy Kumar (vocal) and Ms. K. P. Nandini (violin)

The first half saw Ms. Revathy Kumar, Awardee for the Best Talent Promotion Concert 2012, perform accompanied by Ms. K. P. Nandini, an M. S. Fellowship Awardee, on the violin and Palghat Shri. Harinarayanan on the mridangam. She commenced with a composition of Vijaya Vithalaraya, *Gajavadana Paliso*, in Begada ragam and set to Adi talam with

chittaswarams and also rendered kalpana swarams for the pallavi at 1/2 edam. Then came Nilakantan Sivan's *Ananda Nadamaduvur Thillai* set to Rupaka talam with kalpana swarams being sung one count from veechu at *Natamaduvur Thillai* with variations in the swara endings. This was followed by a well-structured and well-developed Nattakurinji raga alapana although some phrases used the 'ma dha' sanchara instead of 'ma ni dha'. The violin thani was soulful and the raga was sketched well. Tyagaraja's *Manasu Vishaya Nata* set to Adi talam was well presented with kalpana swarams for the anupallavi. The korvai and the kuraippu at 1/2 edam at 'ma' were neatly executed. Next came Maharaja Swathi Thirunal's composition in Kuntalavarali, *Bhogeendra Shayinam* set to Khanda Chapu talam. *Madhurapuri Nilaye Manivalaye Sadaye Maragatha Manimaye*, a Ragam Tanam Pallavi in Varali set to 4 kalai tisra Jhampai talam was the next piece. The varali raga alapana had shades of Todi in it but the tanam was crisply executed. The violin raga alapana was vibrant and good. The artiste rendered kalpana swarams in 2 kalai and the trikalam and tisram was neatly executed with a ragamalika of Hindolam, Bahudari and Bilahari with reverse swarams. The percussion artiste was thrilled to get the opportunity to explore the thani in a complex 2 kalai tisra jampai and did full justice. She concluded the concert with a composition of Annamacharya, *Melu Ledhu Teeru Ledhu*, set to Adi talam tisra nadai and in a ragam created by the violin virtuoso Padmashri A. Kanyakumari called Narayanadri.



(l to r) Palghat Shri. Harinarayanan (mrudangam),  
Shri. Vinay Sharva (vocal) and Ms. K. P. Nandini (violin)

Blessed with a bright and ringing voice, M. S. Fellowship Awardee Shri. Vinay Sharva, who performed in the second half accompanied by the same team, commenced with a short alapana in Shahana ragam and sang the Adi tala varnam *Karunimpa*. Next came a brisk and lively rendering of Tyagaraja's Asaveri kriti, *Ra Rama Inti* set to Adi talam which was followed by a Nagaswarali raga alapana for the kriti *Shri Shankara Guruvaram*, Maha Vaidyanatha Sivan's composition in Rupaka talam for which excellent kalpana swarams were rendered for the pallavi. Next came *Marivere Gati*, Shyama Shastry's Ananda Bhairavi kriti set to Misra Chapu talam. This was followed by an excellent Kharaharapriya alapana where the violin thani was extremely good. Tyagaraja's *Chakkani Raja* set to Adi talam 2 kalai was rendered with niraval and elaborate kalpana swarams at *Kantiki Sundara* with kuraippu at 'dha' on samam. Then came a brisk and well executed thani avartanam. *Muddugare Yashoda*, Annamacharya's composition in Kurinji ragam and set to Adi talam was rendered as the concluding piece.

#### Day 4 : 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2015



(l to r) Palghat Shri. Harinarayanan (mrudangam),  
Smt. Kalpalathika Ravishankar (vocal) and Ms. K. P. Nandini (violin)

Smt. Kalpalathika Ravishankar accompanied by Ms. K. P. Nandini on the violin (both M. S. Fellowship Awardees) and Palghat Shri. Harinarayanan on the mridangam commenced her concert with *Sobillu Saptaswara*, Tyagaraja's kriti in Jagannohini ragam set to Rupaka talam and rendered kalpana swarams at *Sapta Swara*. Then came a raga alapana in Malayamarutam followed by *Karpaga Manohara*, Papanasam Sivan's kriti set to Adi talam with kalpana swarams at *Unadu Adi Paninthen* that had swara porutham. Next came a brisk rendering of Tirupathi Narayanaswamy's kriti *Ika Naina* in Pushpalatika ragam set to Adi talam. This was followed by Keeravani raga alapana which was a not a proper choice after Pushpalatika. The alapana on the violin was rich in raga bhava.

Tyagaraja's *Kaligiyunte* set to Adi talam was rendered with niraval at *Baguga Shri Raghu* at 3/4 edam with short kalpana swarams. A brisk rendering of Swathi Thirunal's *Bhogeendra Shayinam* in Kunthalavarali set to Khanda Chapu talam followed. A Ragam Tanam Pallavi in Shamukhapriya came next. The raga alapana with fast sancharas was well executed and the violin thani that followed was excellent. After the tanam came the pallavi *Sada Muruganai Bhaji Maname Kandana Shanmukhanai* in Adi talam which was rendered in a hurried manner. This was followed by a brief percussion thani after which the anulomam and pratilomam for the pallavi were rendered precisely. The artiste concluded with a tillana composed by Lalgudi jayaraman in Yamuna Kalyani and set to Misra Chapu talam.



(l to r) Palghat Shri. Harinarayanan (mrudangam), Shri. Vivek Moozhikulam (vocal) and Ms. K. P. Nandini (violin)

followed by a good raga alapana of Nattakurinjī after which Swathi Thirunal's kriti *Mamava Sada Varade* set to Rupaka talam with crisp kalpana swarams at *Lalitha* was rendered for which the violin accompaniment in the kalpana swarams was excellent. Then came a brisk presentation of Tyagaraja's Atana kriti, *Anupama Gunambudhi*, set to Khanda Chapu talam. This was followed by an excellent Kalyani raga alapana for which the alapana on the violin was classy. Tyagaraja's kriti *Sundari Nee Divya Rupamu* set to Adi talam was rendered with niraval in single speed on pallavi and kalpana swarams with kuraippu at tara sthayi 'sa'. A good and short thani came next. Swathi Thirunal's *Jalaja Bandhu* in Surutti set to Misra Chapu talam came next and was followed by Lalgudi Jayaraman's Khamas tillana set to Adi talam and the artiste concluded with Swathi Thirunal's mangalam *Bhujaga Shayino* in Yadukula Kambhoji and set to rupaka talam.

#### Day 5 : 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 2015



(l to r) Shri. N. C. Bharadwaj (mrudangam), Shri. Vivek Sadasivam (vocal), Shri. K. J. Dileep (violin)

and good kalpana swarams were rendered for the pallavi. The Poorvikalyani raga alapana that came next was elaborate with fast sancharas and the violin alapana was in typical MSG style. Neelakanta Sivan's *Ananda Natamaduvur Tillai* set to Rupaka talam was presented with kalpana swarams for *Natamaduvur Thillai* showcasing the artiste's good command over laya. This was followed by a pleasing rendition of Muthuswamy Dikshitar's *Purahara Nandana* in Hamir kalyani ragam and set to Adi talam. Then came a detailed Madhyamavathi alapana with very good sancharas followed by an excellent violin alapana. Shyama Shastri's *Palinchi Kamakshi* set to Adi talam was rendered with niraval at *Kanthamagu* and kalpana swarams with good vyavaharm and korvai in tisram double speed at tara sthayi shadjam. Then came an excellent thani that sounded grand. The concert concluded with Annamacharya's *Bhavayami Gopala Balam* in Yamuna Kalyani ragam set to Khanda Chapu talam. All the three artistes are M. S. Fellowship Awardees.

M. S. Fellowship Awardee, Shri. Vivek Moozhikulam, the second artiste of the day, accompanied by the same team, commenced with Muthuswamy Dikshitar's *Vallabha Nayakasya* in Begada ragam set to Rupaka talam rendering kalpana swarams for the pallavi. Next came a brief Natabhairavi raga alapana followed by Papanasam Sivan's kriti *Shri Valli Devasenapathe* set to Adi talam. This was

Shri. Vivek Sadasivam's vocal concert accompanied by Shri. K. J. Dileep on the violin and Shri. N. C. Bharadwaj on the mridangam commenced with *Sarasuda*, the Saveri varnam in Adi talam where he sang in tisram upto charanam and rendered the charanam in one speed. Then came Tyagaraja's Kedaram kriti *Rama Nee Pai Tanako* set to Adi talam for which the mridangam accompaniment was excellent





(l to r) Shri. N. C. Bharadwaj (mrudangam),  
Ms. Brinda Manickavasakan (vocal), Shri. K. J. Dileep (violin)

The second part of the evening had M. S. Fellowship Awardee Ms. Brinda Manickavasakan's vocal concert accompanied by the same artistes. Commencing with *Vallabha Nayakasya*, Muthuswamy Dikshitar's kriti in Begada set to Rupaka talam for which kalpana swarams were sung for the pallavi, she then rendered Tyagaraja's *Sashivadana* in Chandrajyothi raga and set to Adi talam. This was followed by a bhava-rich and classy Dhanyasi raga alapana accompanied by an exquisitely executed violin alapana. Shyama Shastry's *Meenalochani Brova* set to Misra Chapu talam was rendered with niraval at *Gaana Vinodini* in 3 speeds and good kalpana swarams. Then came a short and sweet Sudhdha Saveri alapana with a brisk rendition of Periasami Thooran's *Thaye Tripurasundari* set to Khanda Chapu talam and brisk fast paced kalpana swarams for pallavi. Then came a Ragam Tanam Pallavi in Vachaspathi where an evocative alapana was sung followed by a well rendered tanam. The pallavi *Gowripathe, Umapathe, Vachaspathe Maam Pahi* in a complex Misra jati Tripura talam in Tisra nadai with eduppu at samam was well rendered with good niraval and kalpana swarams followed by an excellent ragamalika of Subhapanthuvarali, Kambhoji, Saranga and Kedaram with the phrase changing to *Kailasapathe, Arunachalapathe, Natanapathe* and *Pashupathe*. The beauty and planning in the choice of these ragams and these particular epithets for Lord Shiva were revealed when she chose compositions that Dikshitar had composed in these very same ragams i.e. *Kailasanathena-Kambhoji, Arunachalanatham-Saranga, Ananda Natana Prakasam-Kedaram* and *Pashupatheeshwaram-Subhapanthuvarali* which made it extremely innovative. The artiste's good planning and time management deserves a special mention. She then sang *Aayar Kozhundai*, an Azhwar Thiruvaimozhi replete with raga bhava in a ragamalika with Hindolam, Shahana and Madhyamavathi followed by the Ambujam Krishna composition set to Adi talam *Adaikkalam* and concluded with Poochi Srinivasa Iyengar's tillana in Kapi set to Talavardhanam talam.

#### Day 6 : 4<sup>th</sup> October, 2015



(l to r) Shri. N. C. Bharadwaj (mrudangam),  
Ms. Sowmya Sridhar (vocal) and Shri. K. J. Dileep (violin)

The first part of the evening had the Awardee for the Best Talent Promotion Concert for 2013, Ms. Sowmya Sridhar's concert accompanied by Shri. K. J. Dileep on the violin and Shri. N. C. Bharadwaj on the mridangam. She commenced with Papanasam Sivan's kriti in Kharaharapriya, *Ganapathiye*, set to Adi talam in which kalpana swarams for the pallavi were rendered. The 'ma' and 'ni' swarams had too much oscillation. Then came a brief sketch of Ganamoorthy raga followed by Tyagaraja's kriti *Ganamoorthi* in Adi talam. Shanmukhapriya alapana followed where there were some slips in the higher octave and also with shudhdha madhyamam touches in many phrases. The violin alapana was very good in characteristic MSG style. Patnam Subramanya Iyer's kriti *Marivere Dikke Varayya* set to Adi talam was rendered with niraval at *Nannu Brovakayundutha Nyayama*. Oothukadu Venkatasubbaiyer's kriti, *Kalyanarama*, in Hamsanadam set to Adi talam came next making it 2 prati madhyama ragams consecutively and 4 Adi tala renditions in a row. Then came a raga alapana in Shankarabharanam in which the essence of the raga eluded the artiste that day. This was followed by a violin alapana and Muthuswamy Dikshitar's *Akshaya Linga Vibho* set to Misra Chapu talam with niraval and kalpana swarams at *Sadhu Janopetha* and was followed by an excellent thani avartanam. The concert concluded with Narayanateertha's *Nanda Nandana Gopala* in a ragamalika set to Adi talam.





(l to r) Shri. N. C. Bharadwaj (mrudangam),  
Kalyanapuram Shri. S. Arvind (vocal), Shri. K. J. Dileep (violin)

The second half had M. S. Fellowship Awardee as well as the Awardee for Best talent promotion Concert, 2014, Kalyanapuram Shri. Arvind's concert with the same accompanying artistes. Commencing with a slokam in Kanada *Hayagrivam Upasmahe*, he went on to render the Kanada Ata tala vanam *Neranammitti* at a very brisk pace where the second speed was rendered excellently. Then came an exquisite Kalyani alapana reminiscent of T. N. Seshagopalan's style followed by Swathi Thirunal's kriti *Pankaja Lochana* set to Misra Chapu talam with niraval and interesting kalpana swarams with varied patterns at *Brindavanantha Kruta*. Then came Patnam Subramanya Iyer's kriti in Sarasangi, *Manavi Chekonavayya*, set to Rupaka talam followed by Tyagaraja's Hamsanadam kriti, *Bantureeti Kolu* set to Adi talam where brisk kalpana swarams were rendered at *Rama Nama*. The main piece was a soulful, rich and classy Bhairavi alapana with good phrases that delineated the raga beautifully followed by an extremely good violin alapana. Muthuswamy Dikshitar's kriti *Balagopala* set to Adi talam was rendered with niraval in 2 speeds at *Neela Neerada Shareera* which was elaborate and sang kalpana swarams for *Neela* as well as *Shareera* and also for *Shareera* at different places with a very lengthy korvai followed by complicated patterns full of vyavaharam in the kuraippu.

N. C. Bharadwaj played a scintillating thani avartanam. Then came an excellent viruttam, *Nannmayum Selvamum*, in a ragamalika of Hamsanandi, Begada (outstanding) and Desh followed by Tanjavur Shankara Iyer's composition *Rama Namame Tuthi* in Desh ragam and set to Adi talam. A tillana in Sindhu Bhairavi came next followed by mangalam.

#### Day 7 : 5<sup>th</sup> October, 2015



(l to r) Shri. Rohit Prasad (mrudangam),  
Ms. J. K. Yogakirtana (vocal), Shri. Narayan Parthasarathy (violin)

The final day had M. S. Fellowship Awardee, Ms. Yogakirtana's concert accompanied by Shri. Narayan Parthasarathy on the violin and M. S. Fellowship Awardee Shri. Rohit Prasad on the mrudangam. She commenced the concert with a varnam *Maa/ Marugan* in Hindolam set to Adi talam and composed by Tanjavur Shankara Iyer. Next came a brief but well rendered Reetigowlai alapana after which Swathi Thirunal's kriti *Paripalaya* set to Rupaka talam was presented. Then came a sparkling Panthuvrali raga alapana where the artiste brought out the raga bhava with the deft and judicious use of the characteristic phrases of that ragam. Mysore Vasudevacharya's kriti *Shankari Ninne* set to Misra Chapu talam was rendered with brisk kalpana swarams in second speed at *Needu Mahima*. Then came a breezy rendering of the Tyagaraja kriti *Kanna Tandri Naapai* in Devamanohari ragam and set to Adi talam. This was followed by a well developed and lustrous Mohanam raga alapana after which Tiruvurur Ramaswamy Pillai's pleasing kriti *Jagadeeshwari* set to Adi talam was presented with niraval and kalpana swarams at *Gati Endru Nambinorai*. Rohit's thani avartanam was well presented with good naadam. The concluding piece was a Lalgudi Jayaraman tillana in Darbari Kanada and set to Adi talam.

The second half of the evening saw a concert by an extremely promising and immensely talented artiste who literally set the stage on fire with his outstanding performance. M. S. Fellowship Awardee, Shri. Sunil Gargyan, who was accompanied by the same team, commenced with a sparkling rendition of Lalgudi Jayaraman's Behag varnam set to Adi talam for which Rohit Prasad's accompaniment was excellent where he followed the artiste word to word on the mrudangam which



(l to r) Shri. Rohit Prasad (mridangam),  
Shri. Sunil Gargyan (vocal), Shri. Narayan Parthasarathy (violin)

lent a special grandeur to the piece. Then came Muthaiah Bhagavathar's Nattai kriti *Shakti Ganapathim Bhajeham* set to Rupaka talam with chittaswaram for which brisk kalpana swarams were rendered for the pallavi. Next was a well sketched Bhairavi raga alapana with good sancharas and fast sangatis followed by one of Tyagaraja's Lalgudi Pancharatnam kritis, *Lalithe Shree Pravrudhe*, set to Adi talam for which niraval was presented at *Teliyani Baluda Gaada* along with one-avartana variety of swaras. The thani avartanam was classy and a befitting accompaniment for the talented performer. Next came a sprightly and fast paced *Iti Nyayama*, Tyagaraja's Malavi kriti with chittaswaram and set to Adi talam. The artiste's staggering prowess and enviable command found expression in an excellent exposition of Hamir kalyani ragam with silky sancharas and breathtaking brigas gliding over 3 octaves and was followed by an equally well presented and exquisite tanam. The pallavi *Shri Rajagopala Baalam Bhaje, Sruta Jana Paalam* set to a complex Chaturasra Jampa talam in Khanda nadai with the eduppu at 4 counts after samam was a show-stopper where the artiste effortlessly unleashed trikalam and tisram in khanda nadai wooing as well as boggling the audience! Rohit's accompaniment for such a complex talam was flawless and full of finesse. The viruttam *Kundram Yendi* in a ragamalika with Nadanamakriya, Punnagavari and Chenchurutti was a feast for the ears and was followed by Ambujam Krishna's Adi tala composition, *Kannanidam Yeduththu Solladi*, in a ragamalika. Then came Swati Thirunal's Adi talam tillana in Dhanasri for which the excellent percussion accompaniment by Rohit Prasad deserves a special mention. This was followed by a soulful rendition of Swati Thirunal's padam *Jalaja Bandhu* in Surutti set to Misra Chapu talam and then mangalam.

The Rising Star Series of concerts is ample evidence of the staggering talent among the youth brigade and a testimony to the fact that Carnatic music is unquestionably one of the greatest of the Performing Arts. A series like this provides great assurance that this precious legacy will definitely stay nourished and well preserved with such remarkable talent.

### Annual Music, Dance and Drama Festival

The Annual Music, Dance and Drama Festival, 2015 had a classical dance performance by Ms. Shobana, carnatic vocal concert by Sikkil Shri. C. Gurucharan, a Hindi orchestra performance of vintage music by Mars entertainment and a mono-act performance by Shri. Shekhar Sen.

### Vocal Concert By Sikkil Shri. C. Gurucharan - 25th October, 2015

Jayashri Suresh



(l to r) Shri. K. V. Prasad (mridangam),  
Sikkil Shri. Gurucharan (vocal), Nagai Shri. R. Shriram (violin)

Sikkil Shri. C. Gurucharan gave a scintillating vocal performance in the Annual Music, Dance and Drama Festival, 2015. He was accompanied by Nagai Shri. R. Shriram on the violin and Shri. K. V. Prasad on the mridangam.

He commenced with a varnam in Hamsadhwani, *Jalajaksha* set to Adi talam.

The second piece was Muthuswamy Dikshitar's *Ekadantam* in Bilahari ragam set to Misra Chapu talam with brisk kalpana swarams at *Kolahala Guruguha* with varied patterns. Next came another composition of Dikshitar in Nagagandhari, *Sarasijanabha Sodari*, set to Rupaka talam where the

words were clearly enunciated adding to the beauty of the song. Next came *Sitamanohara*, a Tyagaraja composition in Rama Manohari ragam set to Adi talam for which he sang alapana and rendered niraval at *Thitta Tanamu Nann Bhakti Sthiramu*. This was followed by a beautiful composition of Tanjore S. Kalyanaraman, *Kuramagal Magizh Kumara*, with evocative lyrics in Kalyana Vasantham ragam set to Adi talam where he sang crisp kalpana swarams for the pallavi and also at *Kumara*. Next came *Marivere Gati*, a composition of G.N.B. in Malavi ragam and set to Adi talam with fast-paced chittaswarams. This was followed by an excellent Kharaharapriya raga alapana with highly imaginative and creative sancharas through which the ragam was brilliantly developed. The violin thani for this was developed using myriad expressions and was simply outstanding. Tyagaraja's *Rama Nee Samaanam Evaru* set to Rupaka talam was rendered with excellent niraval at *Paluku Paluku* with very attractive patterns followed by interesting kalpana swarams with kuraippu at 'da' at 1/2 edam and an intricate lengthy korvai. The percussion thani that came next was brief and mellow. He followed this with a complex Ragam Tanam Pallavi in Saramathi ragam dedicated to Flute N. Ramani, a piece that the artiste had heard from the maestro. The tanam was sung with mrudangam accompaniment and was in a ragamalika with Begada and Brindavana Saranga. The pallavi with the words *Saravananai Guruparanai Maalmaruganai Nitham Ninai Kuravalli Manalanai* was set to Khanda Triputa talam where the artiste sang the purvangam in tisram and the uttarangam in chatusram. He retained the same nadai for the kalpana swarams making it a treat for the listeners. Next came, *Sakhi Prana*, a javali composed by Dharmapuri Subbarayar in Chenchurutti ragam set to Adi talam. This was followed by a composition in a ragamalika praising Lord Hanuman set to Khanda Chapu talam with the lyrics, *Hanumanai Anudinam Ninai Maname* in Madhuvanti, Bagesri, Sindhubhiravi and Revathi. The next piece was a tillana, *Ni Ri Ni Ri Ga Ma Ga Ri Sa* composed by T. Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar in Poorvi ragam set to Rupaka talam and he concluded with mangalam.

### Surdas-Mono Act by Shekhar Sen - 31st October 2015

Jyothi Mohan



Shri. Shekhar Sen enacting Sant Surdas

After a long time, I went to a mono act musical play featured on the last day of the dance-drama festival organized by Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts and Sangeetha Sabha. 'Surdas' by none other than the newly-elected chairman of the Sangeet Natak Akademi, Padmashri Shri. Shekhar Sen was remarkable for the beautiful rendition of soulful bhajans, the wonderful narration and the effective but simple sets.

Sant Surdas, though blind at birth, was ecstatic all his life as he spent it in singing the praise of Lord

Krishna whom he loved unconditionally. None of the man-made barriers of caste or creed made any difference to him as all he could see and feel was the overwhelming love for the divine cowherd Gopal. He had composed more than a hundred thousand songs on his deity in 'Sur Sagar', a compilation, of which only 8000 are extant. Shekhar Sen wove the story of Surdas around these very appealing bhajans which he sang in a soft, well-trained voice, traversing the octaves with ease. The play opened with Surdas sitting on a platform singing the famous bhajan *Ankhiyan Hari Darshan Ki Pyaasi*. Surdas, because he was born blind to poor parents, was a victim of neglect and abuse and this forced him to leave home when he was barely six. His mother who loved him dearly, told him to take refuge in Lord Krishna who would put away all his pain and sufferings. Surdas put his life into his Lord's hands and this gave him the strength to leave home and spend his entire life in the service of his 'Bal Gopal'. Surdas always felt the presence of Lord Krishna around him. There is a scene where Surdas tells the audience how he would put his '*natkhat bal gopal*' to sleep with his lullabies. Krishna is said to have had tears in his eyes. When Sur asked him the reason for his tears, Krishna replied,

"Teri preet ne mera kajal bhiga diya". With his Bal Gopal he leaves for Vrindavan and stays in a small hut with Bachu Baba and his wife Laxmi. People there respect Surdas for his beautiful voice and his love for Krishna. Laxmi showers him with motherly love as she herself is childless. An encounter with the great saint Vallabhacharya on the banks of Yamuna in his teenage years transformed his life completely. Mahaprabhu Vallabhacharya advised him to compose and sing Bhagvad Lila - devotional songs in praise of Krishna and Radha and he did just that, singing songs in praise of his favourite deity Krishna and his consort Radha. The way Sen moved from one platform to the other during his conversations as Surdas, made us feel we were indeed watching the blind saint poet. He was able to capture the attention of the receptive audience through the stories and bhajans of the simple 105-year old saint taking us through the Lord's Bal Leela, the adorable *makhan chor*, his being influenced by Saint Vallabhacharya, his interaction with the emperor Akbar, the legendary Tansen, the meeting with Saint Haridas and so on. When he met Tulsidas, he was overjoyed. At that juncture, Shekhar Sen sang a lovely Tulsidas bhajan and on meeting Mirabai, he introduced a Mira bhajan into his narrative.

The two-hour gripping narration in which Shekhar Sen played the many characters switching voices and accents with ease, interspersed with evocatively rendered bhajans won the audience over. We carried home the serenity and tranquility breathed into the beautiful bhajans.

## AWARDED

Dr. Sakuntala Narasimhan received the Chandana Doordarshan Lifetime achievement



award. The 4th Chandana Doordarshan TV Lifetime Achievements Awards were given on 15th November, 2015, at a glittering, well attended function at Bengaluru's Ravindra Kalakshetra auditorium. The Governor of Karnataka, His Excellency, Vajubhai Vala gave away the awards to 12 eminent persons chosen for their contributions in different fields, like literature, dance, drama and sports.



Dr. Sakuntala Narasimhan was awarded for her contributions to both Carnatic and Hindustani classical music. The award consisted of a citation, shawl and a traditional garland. Award winners were chosen by a panel headed by Justice Shivraj Patil - formerly of the Supreme Court. As Dr. Mahesh Joshi, Addl DG of Doordarshan remarked at the function, this is one award where applications and lobbying are not accepted, the choice is purely on the basis of assessment by a panel of experts in each field. The event was telecast on Chandana channel of Doordarshan.



Dr. N. Ramanathan, an erudite scholar and musicologist, has taken the initiative of uploading all the Shanmukha issues from the years 1978 until 2010 in his website at [musicresearchlibrary.net](http://musicresearchlibrary.net). The sabha thanks Dr. N. Ramanathan for this effort.



## Answers to Quiz on Sangeeta and Natya

1. Tillaivettiyan, Nandan Sambavan (popularly known as Nandanar) and Periyavan Sambavan. (Biography of Gopalakrishna Bharati by U. V. Swaminatha Iyer)
2. Mysore Vasudevachar, Ramnad ('Poochi') Srinivasa Iyengar and 'Tiger' Varadachariar.
3. The Kudumiyamalai inscriptions in Pudukkottai district of Tamil Nadu have the swara notations for the first time in the caves. It was the contribution of Mahendra Varman, the Pallava king belonging to 7th century AD.
4. *Jagadananda* in *Nattai*, the Pancharatna kriti of Tyagaraja.
5. Kedaragowlai, Ritigowlai, Narayanagowlai, Saranganata and Bowli.
6. Veena, Venu (flute) and Mridangam.
7. Fifteen
8. Kavimani Desikavinayakam Pillai
9. In his Devagandhari kriti *Kshirasagara* ("Dheerudau Ramadasuni")
10. Mani Iyer gave the following reason. *Nidhi chala* decries the importance of wealth in contributing to happiness while *Grahabalamemi* expresses doubt on the planetary influences on human beings. He said that it would be hypocritical if he sang those songs because he sang for earning income and believed in the effect that planets can have on humans.
11. Mendelssohn.
12. The origin of the solfa system is attributed to the Italian Guido of Arezzo of the 11<sup>th</sup> century. (Our saptaswaras are traced to the Sama Veda of the pre-Christian era.)
13. Tatkar involves the use of feet in training for dance in the same way as the voice is exercised through the swara in song and the fingers are trained to play instruments. These exercises, which are part of the basic alphabets of dance, are called tatkar. (*The Penguin Dictionary of Indian Classical Music*)
14. Nauka-Charitra (*Kuchipudi* by Raja & Radha Reddy in the Dances of India series)
15. Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry

### Scores (one mark for each correct answer)

Less than 6: Hope is eternal! Start on sarali varisai.

6-10: Good progress! Fit to learn varnam.

11-15: Congratulations! Proceed to Ragam, Tanam and Pallavi.

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## Happenings at the Vidyalaya

### Oothukaadu Venkatasubbier & Gopalakrishna Bharati Day - 18 July, 2015

Nalini Dinesh



(l to r) Shri. Rohit Prasad (Mrudangam), Smt. Chandana Bala Kalyan (vocal), Shri. S. R. Balasubramanian (violin)

Chandana Bala Kalyan's recital of Gopalakrishna Bharati compositions got off to a bright start with *Sabhapatikku* in Abhogi with excellent mridangam accompaniment by Rohit Prasad. *Enneramum Undan* in Devagandhari was rendered next, followed by a brief Kambhoji alapana for the kriti *Tiruvadi Charanam*. An outstanding rendition of a viruttam and *Adum Chidambaram* in Behag and a brief Jonpuri alapana preceding *Eppo Varuvaaro* completed the concert. More attention to sahitya would enhance the quality of Chandana Bala's renditions; for instance, in *Sabhapatikku*, instead of the word *moovar* in the charanam, *mudal* was sung and in *Tiruvadi Charanam*, *aduthu* was sung as *adittha*.



(l to r) Shri. Rohit Prasad (mridangam), Smt. Padma Jayaram, Shri. R. Venkat and Smt. Sugandha Athreya (vocal), Shri. S. R. Balasubramanian (violin)

The next half of the evening featured an Oothukaadu Venkatasubbier presentation by R. Venkat, who gave an introduction about the composer. Venkat had Sugandha Athreya and Padma Jayaram for vocal support. The first song was *Ekadanta* in Naattai set to Khanda Tripura talam. This was followed by a Kalyani composition *Geeta Rasike* with excellent Sanskrit sahitya. *Natavara Taruni*, a song in Kannadagowla had a mix of chatusra and

tisra gati. A vilamba kala kriti in Shankarabharanam *Arulaalan* was followed by a very good Bhairavi alapana by Venkat and his bhava-laden solo rendition of *Ethanai Kettalum*. *Gowrinatham* in Vakulabharanam, *Enna Punniyam Seiden* in Reetigowla, *Vaari Vihari* in Kuntalavarali, *Muthukrishna* in Chenchurutti, a Hameerkalyani tillana with a mix of chatusra and tisra gati, a Khamas javali *Madananga Mohana* in Tamil with swara and swara sahitya capped by a mangalam *Omkara Chitrayutha* Madhyamavati were the other songs rendered. Some phrases sounded odd in the Reetigowla rendition like PD, DMP and PDN usages.

S. R. Balasubramanian supported the artistes on the violin and Rohit Prasad provided good mridangam accompaniment. The programme was compered by Ms. Ramya Ramesh.

### Guru Purnima Celebrations - 31st July 2015

Jyothi Mohan

The Guru Purnima celebrations were held on 31st July, 2015 at the Jasubhai Convention Hall. This year the gathering was even larger as the dance school also participated and the audience spilled out beyond the hall up to the lift! The children were very excited and enthusiastic to perform before such large numbers.

The programme began with an offering from the students of the Carnatic Vocal section, commencing with a brisk and tuneful rendering of the Bilahari swarajathi *Rara Venu Gopa Bala* by sixteen students of the 1<sup>st</sup> year taught by Smt. Usha Shankar. Violin accompaniment was provided by Kum. Dharini Veeraraghavan who is a student of Shri. S. R. Ramachandra Sarma. Mridangam was played by



Students of Smt. Usha Shankar



Students of Smt. Lalitha Iyer



Students of Smt. Sushila Mani



Students of Smt. Radha Namboodiri



Students of advanced class for Veena

Shri. Gopakumar's student Deepak. Fifteen of Smt. Usha Shankar's 2<sup>nd</sup> year students sang the varnam in Shankarabharanam in 2 speeds neatly while fourteen of her students sang the kriti *Telisi Rama* of Tyagaraja in ragam Poornachandrika confidently.

Both groups were accompanied on the violin by Dharini Veeraraghavan and mridangam by Hariharan Iyer, a student of Shri. Gopakumar. Following this, five 4<sup>th</sup> year students of Smt. Lalitha Iyer, evocatively rendered Tyagaraja's *Sangeetha Gnanamu* in ragam Dhanyasi. Seven of her 5<sup>th</sup> year students gave a good rendition of *Gopalakrishnaaya Namasthe* in Kamboji ragam. Dharini Veeraraghavan ably accompanied both groups on the violin while mridangam was played by Hariharan Iyer for the 4<sup>th</sup> year and Deepak for the 5<sup>th</sup> year.

Four students of Smt. Sushilaa Mani of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> years did justice to a Guruvandanam in slokam form, a Tulsidas Bhajan *Gaiye Ganapati* in Hamsadhvani and concluded with the Tiruppugazh *Iravamal Piravamal* in ragam Kapi. Violin accompaniment was by Dharini and mridangam support was provided by Shri. Gopakumar's student Prajesh C. Nair.

Five students of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year Diploma in KVC under the tutelage of Smt. Radha Namboodiri, Director and Principal of the Sangeetha Vidyalaya, sang the *Dvaadasha Ranjani* ragamalika with great maturity. While Rohit Prasad played the mridangam, Dharini played the violin. Seven students of the Special Class of Carnatic Vocal mentored by Smt. Radha Namboodiri sang with ease, the 1<sup>st</sup> two chakras of the challenging 72 Melaragamalika to the excellent support by Dharini and Rohit.

The Carnatic Vocal section was followed by the Carnatic Veena section taught by Smt.

Mythili Sampatkumar. Two students of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year played the swarajathi in Bilahari while four students of the 3<sup>rd</sup> year played a kriti in Kuntalavarali. Three students of Smt. Anuradha Srivatsan of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> years played *Gananathanai* in Gambheeranata. The Special Class for Carnatic Veena had two students playing *Vandeham Jagat* of Annamacharya in Hamsadhvani mellifluously. .

After the Carnatic Music section, it was the turn of the Bharata Natyam section. Eighteen students of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year demonstrated the Asamyuta and Samyuta hastas, Shiro bhedas and Drishti bhedas along with the recitation of the relevant slokas from the Abhinaya Darpanam with confidence



and clarity. Fourteen students of the 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> years demonstrated the viniyoga of the Pataka hasta along with the recitation of the viniyoga sloka from the Abhinaya Darpanam. They also demonstrated their ability to recite the trikala jati of their varnam accurately and confidently in 3 speeds. Kum. Pranamya Rajeevan of the 5<sup>th</sup> year performed the uttarangam of the Nattakurinji varnam of Papanasam Sivan, *Sami Naan Undan Adimai* beautifully with perfect angasuddham and good abhinaya. It was a solo dance as the stage was too small to support a group performance.



Kum. Pranamya Rajeevan



Students demonstrating the viniyoga of the Pataka Hasta.



Students of Smt. Sharmila Pendse

The Hindustani section began with vocal presentations by students of Smt. Sharmila Pendse. Students of the 1<sup>st</sup> year sang a lakshan geet in raag Khamaj and another group sang one in raag Kafi. Her 2<sup>nd</sup> year students sang a Madhya lay chota khyal in Bhoop followed by another group which sang one in Bhimpalasi.



Students of Shri Suresh Degwekar

Two students trained by Shri. Suresh Degwekar of the 3<sup>rd</sup> year sang a composition in raag Tilak Kamod while two students of the 4<sup>th</sup> year sang a bandish in raag Malkauns. Both were accompanied on the tabla by Prem Ohol, a student of Shri. Rajan Singh Thakur.



Students of Hindustani Sitar

Three students of Hindustani sitar teacher Shri P. V. Parchure played raag Miyaki Malhar with perfect synchronisation, good finger technique and perfect lay. The energetic tabla by the duo Aatish Gawand, student of Shri. Milind Joshi and Ananta Patekar embellished the rendering. Shri. Vinay V. Dalvi presented his students in Hindustani harmonium effectively, with each of them given small solo bits to exhibit their training. Five students of 1<sup>st</sup> year played Bhoop to the tabla accompaniment by Rushi Poojari and Yatin, students of Shri. Rajan Singh Thakur. Five students of the 3<sup>rd</sup> year played raag Tilang accompanied on the tabla by Rushi Poojari. Five of his students of 2<sup>nd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> year played raag Bageshri to the tabla accompaniment of Ananta Patekar and Aatish Gawand.



Students of Hindustani Harmonium



Tabla ensemble

The evening ended with a tabla ensemble by students of Shri. Milind Doshi. They played the Ganesh Pharan. The energy and eagerness of the students and the enthusiasm of the audience made for a very satisfying and enjoyable Guru Purnima Celebrations in the Sangeetha Vidyalaya. Kudos to the Principal and the dedicated team of teachers, who made this evening an enjoyable experience.

## Muthu Thandavar, Arunachala Kavirayar & Other Tamil Composers' Day - 22nd August, 2015

Nalini Dinesh



(l to r) Shri. S. Gopakumar (mridangam),  
Smt. Nithya Rajendran (vocal) and Smt. Rajani Iyer (violin)

Nithya Rajendran started her recital with a brisk rendition of Periasami Thooran's Saranga kriti *Gananaathane*, followed by Neelakanta Sivan's *Shambho Mahadeva* which was announced by Nithya as being in Bhoopalam raga, whereas it is actually in raga Bowli. Poorvikalyani alapana was sung before a good rendition of *Ananda Natam Aduvar* with nice sangatis. Consecutive Roopaka tala kritis (*Shambho Mahadeva* and *Ananda Natam Aduvar*) could have been avoided. A charming and bhava-laden rendition of a ragamalika composition of Ambujam Krishna *Kannan Idam Eduthu* was one of the high points of the concert. A Suddhasaveri alapana with good phrasing preceded Periasami Thooran's *Thaaye Thripura Sundari* and an effective rendition of Madurai Srinivasan's famous Sindhubhairavi kriti *Karunai Deivame*. Nithya ended with a Tiruppugazh set in Kalyani raga.



(l to r) Shri. S. Gopakumar (mridangam),  
Smt. Anupama Devarajan (vocal) and Smt. Rajani Iyer (violin)

Anupama Devarajan began with Ramalinga Adigalar's *Kalai Nirai Ganapathi* in Naattai and a Neelakanta Sivan kriti on Goddess Saraswati in Ramapriya raga *Va Va Kalaimaathe*. A viruttam in Saveri preceded Periasami Thooran's *Muruga Muruga Enral*. Dharmavati alapana preceding Ambujam Krishna's *Ododi Vanden Kanna* was rather confusing with shuddha dhaivatam being used a number of times in the beginning of the alapana. *Om Namo Narayana* in Karna Ranjani, Maharajapuram Santhanam's *Basant Bahar tillana* and a Tiruppugazh set in Desh raga ended the concert.

Rajani Iyer and S. Gopakumar supported the artistes on the violin and mridangam respectively. The programme was compered by Bhanumathi Ganesh.

## S. Seshadri Memorial Talent Exposure Concert 11th September, 2015

Jayashri Suresh

Shri. K. S. Pradyumna, a 7th year student at the Vidyalaya gave a Carnatic vocal concert accompanied by Kum. Dharini Veeraraghavan, a 7th year student on the violin and Shri. Prajesh Nair, a 5th year student on the mridangam.



(l to r) Prajesh C. Nair (mrudangam), K. S. Pradyumna (vocal) and Kum. Dharini Veeraraghavan (violin)

Blessed with a naturally bhava-laden voice, Pradyumna began his recital with the Kambhoji Ata tala varnam of Vadivelu which was well rendered in 2 speeds upto the charanam. Dharini's violin accompaniment added lustre to the rendition. This was followed by Tyagaraja's kriti *Ganamurthe* set to Adi talam where only the kriti was presented. Then came a good and well executed Panthuvrali raga alapana for which the violin alapana was soulful. Swati Thirunal's Navarathri kriti, *Saroruhasana*, set to Adi talam was presented with niraval and kalpana swarams that were very neatly rendered with no errors in the kuraippu at 'pa'. He concluded the concert with Mahakavi Subramanya Bharatiyar's composition in Abheri, *Kali Valiya Chamundi*, set to Adi talam.



(l to r) Prajesh C. Nair (mrudangam) and Kum. Dharini Veeraraghavan (violin solo)

The second part of the evening saw a violin solo recital by Kum. Dharini Veeraraghavan, a talented 7th year student of the Vidyalaya who was accompanied by Shri. Prajesh Nair on the mridangam. Beginning with a neatly presented Thiruvotriyur Tyagayyar's varnam *Sami Dayajuda* in Kedaragowlai set to Adi talam, she then played Muthuswamy Dikshitar's kriti, *Mahaganapatim*, in Nattai set to Eka talam with deftness. Then came an excellent Kharaharapriya raga alapana which was well-structured and full of bhava with soothing strokes and skilful playing. This was followed by Tyagaraja's kriti *Vidamu Seyave* set to Adi talam with kalpana swarams for the pallavi. The concluding piece was a sparkling Behag tillana of Lalgudi Jayaraman set to Adi talam tiska nadai.

The evening was compered by Smt. Bhavani Srinivasan.

### Pt. V. D. Paluskar and Pt. V. N. Bhatkande Day - 19th September, 2015

Jyothi Mohan



(l to r) Shri. Abhay Datar (tabla), Shri. Nishad Bakre (vocal) and Shri. Anant Joshi (harmonium)

The Shanmukhananda Bharatiya Sangeetha Vidyalaya celebrated Pt. Vishnu Digambar Paluskar and Pandit Vishnu Narayan Bhatkande Day in the Vaggeyakara Day Celebrations on September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2015 at the Jasubhai Convention Hall. Shri Nishad Bakre and Smt. Meenal Deshpande were featured in Hindustani vocal recitals to mark the day.

Shri. Nishad Bakre, after initial lessons from his father Shri. Sadashiv Bakre, trained intensively for more than twelve years under Dr. Ram Deshpande of the Gwalior-Agra gharana. Later on, he had the privilege of learning under Pt. Dinkar Kaikini, Pt. Madhukar Joshi, Pt. Ulhas Kashalkar and Dr. Arun David. This enabled him to sing in the different styles of the Gwalior, Agra and Jaipur gharanas. He has received the Surashri Kesarbai Kerkar Scholarship of the NCPA, Pt. Shri Krishna Ratanjankar Award among others. He has an audio CD and an android app for music to his credit.

Shri. Nishad Bakre commenced his recital with an alaaap in Purva Kalyan. The vilambit khyal of Annasaheb Ratanjankar *Hovana Laagi Saanjh* had the new concept of having meaning and

philosophy in the lyric. He concluded with a drut composition of Pt. Shankar Abhyankar *Peeharva Aaja Aajare*. Shri. Nishad Bakre is endowed with a good voice which has clarity in both, vilambit and drut phrasings. His fast *taans* were crisp and attractive.



(l to r) Shri. Abhay Datar (tabla), Smt. Meenal Deshpande (vocal) and Shri. Anant Joshi (harmonium)

The second artiste of the evening was Smt. Meenal Deshpande who is principally a classical vocalist. However, she has to her credit several performances in semi-classical, light and devotional music as well. She is a visiting faculty with the Department of Music, Mumbai University taking lectures for post-graduate and M. Phil students. She has conducted lec-dems and workshops on many aspects of music and has also

presented researched papers in conferences on music. She is featured regularly on television and is also a graded AIR artiste.

Smt. Meenal Deshpande began with a vilambit khyal in raag Nand followed by a drut khyal *Saajan Sundar Salone Bhaye*. This was followed by a composition *Navara Raghunath* of Pt. V. D. Paluskar in raag Basant set to jhap tal. She concluded with a tarana in raag Basant. All the compositions she rendered were traditional compositions. She sings with a powerful and open-throated, melodious voice which made a good impact in both, vilambit and drut compositions.

The tabla accompaniment for both vocalists was by Shri. Abhay Datar who after training under his father Shri. Prabhakar Datar was groomed by the great maestro Pt. Bhai Gaitonde. He also came under the influence of Pt. Yashwantbua Joshi.

The harmonium sangat was by Shri. Anant Joshi who has been trained by Pt. Vishwanath Kanhere and Pt. Shrinivas Khale. He is the recipient of the Culture Ministry of India's fellowship for 2011-2012. He has accompanied renowned artistes for the Akashwani Sangeet Sammelan and other festivals besides giving solo concerts all over the country and abroad. He has played for Marathi films and TV shows. He composes songs for theme-based programmes as well.

Both accompanying artistes being seasoned artistes gave excellent, mellow sangat embellishing the vocal performances.

### Saraswati Pooja Celebration 21<sup>st</sup> October, 2015 and Vidyarambham 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 2015

Jayashri Suresh



(l to r) Smt. Radha Namboodiri and Smt. Mythili Sampatkumar where Smt. Mythili is performing the Saraswati Pooja

On 21<sup>st</sup> October 2015, Saraswati Pooja was conducted in the evening followed by a rendering of Kamakshi Devi Kritis of various composers by Siddhi Krishnamoorthy, Bharathi Nagaraj, Hemamalini Arun, Sunita Ganesh and Mahathi Nagaraj, all students of Sangeetha Kala Acharya Smt. Kalyani Sharma. The kritis rendered were *Sri Kamakshi* in Vasanta and *Adi Talam* of Tiruvaroor Ramaswamy Pillai, *Vaanchasi Yadi Kushalam* in Kalyani and *Adi talam*-the dhyana kriti of Kamakshi Navavaranam of Oothukkadu Venkatasubbier, *Kamakshi Nee Padayugamu* in Yadukulakambhoji and *mishrachapu talam*-one of Syama Shastri's *ratna trayam swarajatis*, *Sariyavva Ramma* in Bhairavi and *Khanda jhampa talam* of Syama Shastri, *Kamakshi Varalakshmi* in Bilahari and *Adi talam* of Muthuswamy Dikshitar and concluded with *Palinchu Kamakshi* in Madhyamavati and *Adi talam* of Syama Shastri.



They were accompanied on the violin by Smt. Vanamala Dixit and on the mrudangam by Vishwaprassanna. It may be mentioned that *Sariyavva Ramma*, the Bhairavi kriti of Syama Shastri was reckoned in Adi talam whereas it has been composed in Khanda jati jhampa talam.



Smt. Radha Namboodiri, Principal, Smt. Shyamala Sury and Shri. Amarnath Sury participating in the punar pooja on vidyarambham day

The preliminary pooja for Vidyarambham was held from 9 am in the Jasubhai Convention Hall. This was followed by a vocal group rendering of Sarali Varisai. *Shri Gananatha* (Geetam), *Varaveena* (Geetam) and *Shri Saraswati* (Muthuswami Dikshitar's kriti in Arabhi raga) by all faculty members (Carnatic & Hindustani) and present students of the Vidyalaya. Initiation classes for the old students commenced after the group rendition.



Vidyarambham at the Sangeetha Vidyalaya.

### Muthuswamy Dikshitar Day - 14th November, 2015

Jayashri Suresh



(l to r) Shri. Prasad Balan Iyer (mrudangam), Smt. Prabha Ramji, Smt. Saraswathy Murthy and Smt. Radha Ramachandran (veena)

The evening began with a veena recital by Smt. Saraswathy K. Murthy accompanied by Smt. Prabha Ramji and Smt. Radha Ramachandran on the veena and Shri. Prasad Balan Iyer on the mrudangam.

They commenced with the kriti *Maha Ganapathe* in Natanarayani ragam set to Adi talam. Smt. Prabha played a very pleasing Ramapriya raga alapana followed by a brief

and well executed tanam. *Smaramyham Sada Rahum*, one of the Navagraha kritis set to Rupaka talam was presented. Smt. Saraswathy played an evocative Ananda Bhairavi raga alapana followed by a rich tanam after which another Rupaka talam kriti *Tyagaraja Yoga Vaibhavam* was rendered. Smt. Radha showcased an exquisite Kalyani raga alapana before playing a crisp and deft tanam. One of the Balambika Navavarna kritis *Bhaja Re Re Chittha* was flawlessly rendered. The concluding piece was *Sarasijanabha Sodari*, the Nagagandhari kriti set to Rupaka talam. The combined naadam of the 3 veenas sounded majestic especially in the Ananda Bhairavi piece. The soft and melodious vocal accompaniment for the kritis by Smt. Prabha Ramji enhanced the beauty of the renditions while the simultaneous playing in the tara sthayi by one and the mandra sthayi by another produced an extremely pleasing effect. It was indeed a fitting tribute to a *vainika-gayika*.



(l to r) Shri. Prasad Balan Iyer (mridangam),

Smt. Bhavani Srinivasan (vocal) and Kum. Dharini Veeraghavan (violin)

The second half of the evening had a vocal recital by one of the faculty members, Smt. Bhavani Srinivasan, who was accompanied by Kum. Dharini Veeraraghavan on the violin and Shri. Prasad Balan Iyer on the mridangam.

Beginning with the Chakravakam kriti, *Gajananayutam* set to Adi talam, she went on to sing a brief raga alapana in Nattakurinji followed by *Parvathy Kumaram Bhavaye* set to Rupaka talam. Next came *Veenabheri*, a kriti which is not commonly heard, in Abheri ragam and set to Adi talam. This was followed by the Khamas kriti *Santhanagopalam* set to Rupaka talam and the Sriranjani kriti *Parvatharajakumari* set to Adi talam. Shankarabharanam raga alapana came next followed by the Adit ala kriti *Brihadeeswaraya*. One of the Kamalamba Navavarna kritis in Ahiri, *Sri Kamalamba* set to 2 kalai Rupaka talam was rendered followed by the concluding piece *Gange Maam Pahi* in Chenchurutti ragam and set to Khanda Chapu talam. Smt. Bhavani's energetic voice was supplemented by Dharini and Prasad accompanying her with gusto.

The evening was compered by Ms. Meera Sridar.

## OBITUARY



< Pithukuli Murugadas

\*On Skanda Sashti day, one of the greatest devotees of Lord Muruga passed away. Pithukuli Murugadas, the devotional singer aged 95, died in Chennai on Tuesday, 17th November, 2015. Born on 25th January, 1920, Murugadas (Balasubramanian) learnt bhajans from his grandfather Gopalakrishna Bagavathar. While participating in a freedom struggle in 1936, he was severely beaten up by police and lost vision in his left eye completely.

Murugadas, who started his musical career in 1947, has written and composed thousands of devotional songs. He was a writer, lyricist and music composer and his songs on Krishna, particularly the compositions of Oothukadu Venkata Subbaiyer became very popular.

Brahmananda Paradesiyar, a saint, named him 'Pithukuli' (a spiritual person) and Swami Ramadas, Head of Anandashram in Kanjangod in Kerala, added the title Murugadas meaning 'the servant of Lord Muruga'. Murugadas was an expert in Tiruppugazh singing and cut a lot of records. He was known for his perfect pronunciation and diction. Murugadas has many awards to his credit including the Kalaimamani from the Tamil Nadu government and the Sangeet Natak Akademi award.


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